

ARMS AND THE MAN: A STUDY OF DRYDEN'S AENEID

By

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Dryden's Aeneid has appealed to English readers for over two centuries--from the time of Pope (who called it "the most noble and spirited translation I know in any language") down to the present day. Apart, however, from valuable studies by William Frost and Leslie Proudfoot, Dryden's poem has received surprisingly little attention from scholars and critics.

Over the course of five chapters, I try to demonstrate the richness and vitality of Dryden's translation by comparing it with others (including the recent version by Robert Fitzgerald) and by looking at the way that Dryden absorbs the language of such predecessors as Milton and Spenser. It was thanks, in part, to his assimilation of previous poets that Dryden could endeavor to make Virgil speak like a native Englishman--a topic I treat at some length in Chapter One.

"The Language of an Epick Poem," according to Dryden, "is almost wholly figurative." I use this observation as

the theme of Chapter Two, where I discuss Dryden's handling of the epic simile, and as the theme of Chapter Three, where I focus on what seems to me an important pattern of imagery--that of fire and disease. It is Dryden's command of figurative language (and rhetorical figures) that sets him apart from other translators and that helps him shape, to a large extent, a poem of his own. Chapters Four and Five embrace the larger subject of Dryden as a narrative poet; here I give attention to how he tells the story of Nisus and Euryalus in Book Nine and the story of Camilla in Book Eleven. In each episode, Dryden offers an ironic view of heroic valor, together with a shrewd awareness of the human greed and folly which undermine these characters.

The words of Virgil, according to Dryden, have "often somewhat that is connatural to the subject." A firm believer in the power of prosody, Dryden also shows us, time and again, the many "secrets of Versification" which he himself had learned from Virgil.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

"Scarcely any one of our poets," said Dr. Johnson of Matthew Prior, "has written so much and translated so little."<sup>1</sup> Such was not the case with John Dryden, a prolific writer and a prolific translator.<sup>2</sup> Among the many authors Dryden rendered into English (the list includes Homer, Theocritus, Lucretius, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Juvenal, Persius, Boccaccio, and Chaucer), his Virgil of 1697 holds pride of place. According to Earl Miner, it is "the great remaining tract of Dryden studies to need exploration."<sup>3</sup>

Over the course of five chapters I try to demonstrate the richness and vitality of Dryden's translation by comparing it with those of C. Day Lewis, Rolfe Humphries, F.O. Copley, Allen Mandelbaum, and Robert Fitzgerald, and by looking at the way that Dryden absorbs the language of such predecessors as Spenser and Milton, whose legacy I discuss in this chapter. It was Dryden's opinion that "the Language of an Epick Poem is almost wholly figurative"

(Dedication of the Aeneis, III, 1055).<sup>4</sup> I use this observation as the theme of Chapter Two, where I treat Dryden's handling of the epic simile, and as the theme of Chapter Three, where I focus on what seems to me an important pattern of imagery--that of fire and disease.

Chapter Four and Five embrace the larger subject of Dryden as a narrative poet; here I give attention to how he tells the story of Nisus and Euryalus in Book Nine, and the story of Camilla in Book Eleven. Like Virgil, Dryden offers an ironic view of heroic valor together with a shrewd awareness of the human greed and folly which undermine these characters.

Pope called Dryden's Aeneid "the most noble and spirited Translation I know in any language";<sup>5</sup> yet "few critics" (as Donald R. Johnson observes of its companion piece, the Georgics) "have given more than a nod to poem."<sup>6</sup> The notable exception is Leslie Proudfoot, whose admirable study, Dryden's Aeneid and Its Seventeenth Century Predecessors,<sup>7</sup> shows that Dryden consulted nearly every available version--John Vicars, Robert Stapylton, Sidney Godolphin, Edmund Waller, James Harrington, John Denham, John Ogilby, Robert Howard, and Richard Maitland, Earl of Lauderdale. Excellent in many ways, Proudfoot's study has serious shortcomings: it is marred, first of all, according to David Latt, "by an evident dislike of Dryden's translation";<sup>8</sup> this lack of sympathy, says Robert Eagles, makes Dryden emerge "as merely the sum of all the scraps he stole";<sup>9</sup> "another important matter," says William Frost, "is Dryden's prosody and style in general"; and here especially, according to Frost, "Proudfoot's comments need enlarging."<sup>10</sup>

In his own brilliant study, Dryden and the Art of Translation, William Frost set out to show "the kind of



results which can be achieved when a poet with a style of his own, and a genuine imaginative insight into an earlier writer in another language, undertakes the task of verse translation."<sup>11</sup> Although Frost devotes only part of his study to the Aeneid, the results of his analysis are far-reaching and far-reaching. No one, I think, has shown a better understanding of Dryden's characteristic methods of verse translation ("compression, expansion, and substitution")<sup>12</sup> or a better awareness of Dryden's strengths as an interpreter of Virgil (which "come mainly . . . from his sympathetic understanding of the Roman ideals of civilization as embodied in epic verse").<sup>13</sup> My own study owes more to Frost than it does to Proudfoot, according to whom "scholarly comparisons of Dryden and Virgil are necessarily superficial if they ignore the earlier translators."<sup>14</sup> Certainly, the earlier translators should not be slighted, and I touch upon them (Lauderdale especially) whenever their contribution seems relevant. It seems to me, however, that just as much may be learned about Dryden's achievement by looking at the work of his successors.

Our twentieth-century scholar-poets have turned out accurate reproductions of Virgil, but they all suffer from one disadvantage, of which C. Day Lewis is acutely conscious:

Today we are in a less favorable position than Dryden was, for we have no style of our own in poetry, no artificial "literary" manner which

would suggest the style of Virgil. Dryden did very largely create his own grand manner, it is true: but he had a still living tradition of narrative verse to work on, whereas we have not got such a tradition.<sup>15</sup>

The narrative tradition Day Lewis had in mind was brought to perfection, not by those minor authors whom Proudfoot so ably describes, but by Spenser and Milton, whom Dryden considered "the nearest in English to Virgil and Horace in the Latine" (III, 1051). It was thanks, in no small part, to these great poets that Dryden could endeavor "to make Virgil speak such English as he would himself have spoken, if he had been born in England, and in this present Age" (III, 1055).

Despite the widespread admiration of many readers (Pope, Scott, Saintsbury, Tillyard, Brower--to mention only a few), Dryden has had, ever since the time of Rev. Luke Milbourne (1698), a small but vocal army of detractors.<sup>16</sup> The usual complaint leveled against his work is its frequent and fulsome amplification of Virgil's meaning. Mark Van Doren, the most influential of these critics, accused Dryden of filling out his lines with formulas, of laying in "a fund of phrases with which he could expand any passage that seemed to him curt."<sup>17</sup> Dryden himself was well aware that Virgil "studies Brevity more than any other Poet," but he also recognized that Virgil "had the Advantage of a Language wherein much may be comprehended in a little space" (III, 1054). The "way to please the best Judges," Dryden felt, "is not to translate a poet literally, and Virgil least of any other" (III, 1053).

What Dryden meant by not translating a poet literally is explained at some length in his Dedication:

The way I have taken, is not so streight as Metaphrase, nor so loose as Paraphrase: Some things too I have omitted, and sometimes added of my own. Yet the omissions I hope, are but Circumstances, and such as wou'd have no grace in English; and the Additions, I also hope, are easily deduc'd from Virgil's Sense. They will seem (at least I have the Vanity to think so,) not stuck into him, but growing out of him.

(III 1054)

The via media which Dryden proposes in this preface appears to be a readjustment of his earlier position in The Preface to Ovid's Epistles (1680), where "Paraphrase, or Translation with Latitude" (I, 182), mediates between the two extremes of "Metaphrase" on the one hand and "Imitation" on the other.<sup>18</sup> Dryden adds a good deal more than he lets on (his poem is almost half again as long as the original), and in practice he often goes in the direction of imitation, "where the Translator (if he now has not lost that Name) assumes the Liberty not only to vary from the words and sence, but to forsake them both as he sees occasion" (I, 182). Dryden's figurative language ("not stuck into him, but growing out of him") tells something important about his theory of translation, not readily apparent from this constant shuffling of critical terms: his additions to Virgil, rather than the result of some mechanical operation, are part of an organic process.

We may test this claim by looking at a passage of Virgil that must have seemed to Dryden particularly curt--Dido's cursing of Aeneas (IV 382-84):

spero equidem mediis, sia quid pia numina possunt,  
supplicia hausurum scopulis et nomine Dido  
saepe vocaturum.<sup>19</sup>

The Loeb translation, by H.R. Fairclough, goes like this:

Yet I trust, if the righteous gods can avail aught,  
that on the rocks midway thou wilt drain the cup of  
vengeance and often call on Dido's name.

More effectively and succinctly than Fairclough, F.O. Copley carries out Dryden's definition of metaphrase, "or turning an Author word by word, and Line by Line, into another Language" (I, 182):

Midway, I trust, if god has power, you'll drink  
requital on a reef and think of Dido.<sup>20</sup>

In the hands of a capable writer, verse is clearly a superior medium to prose for turning poetry from one language into another. Copley, for instance, in the space of two pentameter lines, is able to capture the startling metaphor, supplicia hausurum ("you'll drink requital"), as well as the chiming assonance of hausurum/vocaturum ("and think of Dido"). Dryden, who allows himself much greater latitude than either Fairclough or Copley, is not the sort of translator who wants to provide, first and foremost, "the best close equivalent for the phrases of the original":<sup>21</sup>

Yet, if the Heav'ns will hear my Pious Vow,  
The faithless Waves, not half so false as thou,  
Or secret Sands, shall Sepulchers afford  
To thy proud Vessels, and their perjur'd Lord.  
(550-53)

I have underscored the above passage with double lines to indicate Dryden's substitutions and with single lines to indicate his insertions. It is obvious that they constitute well over half of the short passage just cited.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that despite Dryden's variance from his source, most of his additions grow out of Virgil. The sarcastic epithets "faithless," "false," and "perjur'd" reiterate, with a vengeance, that earlier epithet, perfide (366). The epithet "proud" cuts several ways at once: it glances at the splendid appearance of the "Vessels," at the pride Dido took in restoring the "ruin'd Fleet" (541), and at the arrogance the ships assume from association with Aeneas, "their perjur'd Lord." These additions, aided by insistent alliteration, serve a special purpose--to heighten the sense of outrage Dido feels at being abandoned by her lover. Dryden makes her personify everyone and everything (even the "Sands" become her "secret" conspirators); by transferring, furthermore, the epithet pia from the gods to Dido ("Yet, if the Heav'ns will hear my Pious Vow"), he turns her curse into a kind of blasphemy. Dryden also conveys something of Virgil's expressive syntax, by holding back to the very end the most emphatic element of Dido's sentence ("their perjur'd Lord"). In so doing, he anticipates the insight of a recent commentator, R.D. Williams; according to Williams, "the wide separation of mediis . . . scopulis seems to emphasize the hoped-for-isolation of her shipwrecked lover, far from human aid."<sup>22</sup> As so often happens in his Aeneid, Dryden makes

explicit what is implicit in Virgil; more than isolation, more than shipwreck, the scourge for perjury these "Sepulchers" afford is nothing less than death.

ii

Any fair assessment of Dryden's Aeneid must take into account the way it evokes other literary contexts. The extent to which his poem absorbs the language of other English poets (especially Spenser and Milton) has never, to my knowledge, been adequately appreciated.<sup>23</sup> I should now like to show, through selected illustrations, how Dryden can create "his own grand manner" in such a way as "to suggest the style of Virgil," and how he does this with the help of Spenser and Milton. These poets, said Mark Van Doren, "remain on the other side of the world from Dryden; but he visits them and takes from them whatever he can carry away."<sup>24</sup> What Dryden does, however, is far more creative than simple plundering.

His debt to Spenser shows most clearly in the opening lines of the Aeneid, a passage much admired for "its studied magnificence":

Arms, and the Man I sing, who, forc'd by Fate,  
And haughty Juno's unrelenting Hate;  
Expell'd and exil'd, left the Trojan Shoar:  
Long Labours, both by Sea and Land he bore;  
And in the doubtful War, before he won  
The Latian Realm, and built the destin'd Town.  
(1-6)

Here, according to Proudfoot, "words are lent a new and fuller content than before, as in the use of 'long' for

'protracted' or 'enduring.'<sup>25</sup> Although this adjective has just the sense that Proudfoot claims, there is nothing really "new" about Dryden's use of it. Spenser coined this epic formula ("Long Labours") a century before Dryden, and both clearly recognize the expressive value of the emphatic spondee, which stresses the idea of heroic effort:

Young knight, what ever that doth armes professe,  
And through long labours hunttest after fame,  
Beware of fraud.

(FQ I iv 1)<sup>26</sup>

The introductory lines of Virgil, according to Kenneth Quinn, amount "to an assertion that the poem is itself both an Iliad--a story of war and fighting (arma)--and an Odyssey--the story of a man's adventures."<sup>27</sup> In reviving Spenser (whose address to the Redcrosse Knight re-asserts the dual theme of Virgil), Dryden is invoking a native tradition of narrative poetry; and like any good writer, he is also following the advice of Horace. As Pope puts it:

Mark where a bold expressive Phrase appears,  
Bright through the rubbish of some hundred years;  
Command old words that long have slept, to wake,  
Words, that wise Bacon, or brave Raleigh spake.  
(Epistle II ii 165-68)<sup>28</sup>

That "bold expressive Phrase" of Spenser (it occurs several times in the course of The Faerie Queene<sup>29</sup>) gives extra force to those other important themes of divine destiny and divine wrath--themes which are driven home in the resounding rhymes, "Fate" and "Hate."

What Maynard Mack has said of Pope's Homeric translations holds true for Dryden: "Much of what [he] accomplishes and fails to accomplish . . . is determined by

the capacities of the closed heroic couplet" (TE, VII, lxii). Although the larger sweep of the Latin hexameter lay beyond the "narrow compass" of Dryden's "Heroick Verse" (III, 1953), he was willing to forgo "the advantage of writing in Blank Verse" (III, 1049), and partly, I think, for the sake of speed. If he had chosen to write in blank verse, he might have produced something comparable to the lines of Allen Mandelbaum's modern verse translation:

I sing of arms and of a man: his fate  
had made him fugitive; he was the first  
to journey from the coasts of Trgy as far  
as Italy to the Lavinian shores.<sup>30</sup>

These lines not only lack speed; they also show that Mandelbaum lacks the art, among other things, of drawing out the sense from one verse into another. Virgil has

Arma virumque cano, Troiae qui primus ab oris  
Italiam fato profugus Laviniaque venit  
litora,

(1-3)

and Dryden, like Virgil, shows the relatedness of sense through deliberate displacement and inversion of word order ("Arms, and the Man I sing, who, forc'd by Fate") and by postponing the predicate ("Expell'd and exil'd, left the Trojan Shoar"). The repetition of the prefix "ex" (meaning "out") iterates the theme of compulsory wandering (fato profugus) in a more convincing manner than any flat, prosaic rendering ("his fate / had made him fugitive"). By the time we reach "the Trojan Shoar," we have gone beyond the normal boundaries of the "closed heroic couplet"; we have also been given something of the ongoing movement of Virgil (Laviniaque venit / litora).



My next example comes from the storm scene in Book One where Neptune, summoning the rebellious winds, delivers this stern rebuke to their master, Aeolus:

"tenet ille immania saxa  
vestras, Eure, domos; illa se iactet in aula  
Aeolus et claustro ventorum carcere regnet."  
(139-41)

R.D. Williams admires the way "Day Lewis renders the contemptuous tone":<sup>31</sup>

His domain is the mountain of rock,  
Your domicile, O East Wind. Let Aeolus be king of  
that castle  
And let him keep the winds locked up in its dungeon.  
Disdain such as this (note the cute cliché, "king of that castle") is no match for the kind of invective Dryden produces:

His pow'r to Hollow Caverns is confin'd,  
There let him reign, the Jailor of the Wind:  
With Hoarse Commands his breathing Subjects call,  
And boast and bluster in his empty Hall.  
(199-202)

It is Dryden's command of figurative language (and rhetorical figures) that sets him apart from other translators and that helps him shape, to a large extent, a poem of his own. Thus the idea that winds can be imprisoned (claustro ventorum carcere) becomes here an elaborate conceit of mythic bombast, wherein "windy" words ("hollow," "hoarse," "breathing," "empty") conspire with mocking terms of authority ("pow'r," "reign," "Jailor," "Commands," "Subjects," "Hall"). If Dryden goes beyond Virgil and turns Aeolus into a pompous windbag, the license to do so came, in part, from Spenser. Some readers may hear, in the hearty alliteration of the final line ("boast and bluster"), echoes

from the description of the giant who captures the Redcrosse Knight:

And greatest Earth his uncouth mother was,  
And blustering Aeolus his boasted sire.  
(EQ I vii 9)

Spenser came, yet once again, to Dryden's aid, and this time at a telling moment in Virgil's narrative--when Aeneas has finished giving false cheer to his crew:

Talia voce refert, curisque ingentibus aeger  
spem voltu simulat, premit altum corde dolorem.  
(I 208-09)

These Words he spoke; but spoke not from his Heart;  
His outward Smiles conceal'd his inward Smart.  
(291-92)

In his early poem, Annus Mirabilis, Dryden professedly imitated the second line of Virgil (209):

His face spake hope, while deep his sorrows flow.  
(Stanza LXXIII)

This version, however, is no more felicitous than any modern rendering:

He kept to himself the sorrow in his heart,  
Wearing, for them, a mask of hopefulness.  
(Rolfe Humphries)<sup>32</sup>

Dryden's later couplet, with its pointed repetition ("he spoke; but spoke not") and balanced antithesis ("outward Smiles" and "inward Smart"), marks a vast improvement over his earlier effort to reproduce Virgil's poignant contrast of hope (spem) and sorrow (dolorem). Some of this success is due to Spenser; in that lachrymose poem, The Teares of the Muses, Calliope (the muse of epic poetry) laments:

To whom shall I my evill case complaine,  
Or tell the anguish of my inward smart.  
(421-22)

Borrowing, perhaps unconsciously, this final phrase from Spenser ("inward smart"), Dryden imparts a greater feeling of anguish to his portrait of Aeneas.

Somewhat later in Book One, Aeneas chances on his mother Venus, disguised as a huntress, to whom he explains:

diversa per aequora vectos  
forte sua Libycis tempestas appulit oris.  
(376-77)

Aeneas, it is clear, has little inkling of the supernatural force which drives him here and there (diversa per aequora) at its own caprice (forte sua). Robert Fitzgerald is at his best in rendering a dramatic nuance such as this:

we sailed the seas,  
And yesterday were driven by a storm,  
Of its own whim, upon this Libyan coast.<sup>33</sup>

According to Dryden:

On various Seas by various Tempests tost,  
At length we landed on your Lybian Coast.  
(519-20)

Here, it seems to me, Dryden's couplet art shows itself to great advantage, thanks to the cross tension provided by repetition ("various . . . various") and alliteration, which guides the eye and ear through the successive stages of Aeneas' journey ("At length . . . landed . . . Lybian"). An added dimension--one that Dryden may not have intended the reader to notice--also comes into play. This couplet echoes, to a certain extent, the words of Pastorell on being rescued by Calidore; there we find the same end rhyme ("tempest tost"/"cost") and the same initial phrase ("At length"):

Like him that being long in tempest tost,  
Looking each houre into deathes mouth to fall,  
At length espyes at hand the happie cost.  
(FQ VI xi 44)

There is a certain originality in knowing how to place a borrowed technique, and the placement of this borrowing has an obvious emotional and thematic relevance.

Dryden's recollections of Spenser are not confined to Book One, but reverberate throughout the long course of his Aeneid. When Aeneas, for instance, says to Dido,

Nor can my Mind forget Eliza's Name,  
While vital Breath inspires this Mortal Frame,  
(IV 485-86)

Dryden draws on Spenser's pledge, in The Ruines of Time (309-10), to perpetuate the fame of Sidney:

Yet whilst the fates affoord me vitall breath,  
I will it spend in speaking of thy praise.  
(309-10)

Spenser himself appears to have drawn his inspiration from Virgil:

nec me meminisse pigebit Elissae,  
dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos regit artus.  
(IV 335-36)

Here, despite Aeneas' emphatic protestation (dum memor . . . dum spiritus), there is a coldness and stiffness (nec me meminisse pigebit) which Dido is quick to seize upon. Aeneas is not a good stoic, and his words reveal the strain that comes from trying to repress his emotions and express them at the same time. Fitzgerald catches the undertone of distance and retreat:

Never will the memory of Elissa  
Stale for me, while I can still remember  
My own life, and the spirit rules the body.

("Stale" alliterates and consonates to good effect with the adverb "still.") We have no reason to doubt the sincerity of Aeneas, yet his dilemma seems to strike a more responsive chord in Dryden ("While vital Breath inspires this Mortal Frame") than it does in Fitzgerald. Dryden, moreover, reaffirms his sympathy with Aeneas in the last line of this farewell speech: "Forc'd by my Fate, I leave your happy Land" (517)--words that take us back to the beginning of the poem, when "forc'd by Fate," he "left the Trojan Shoar."

Now and then, moreover, and thanks again to Spenser, Dryden will produce a phrase which has the effect of an epic formula:

Fierce Turnus view'd the Trojan from afar;  
And lanch'd his Jav'lin from his lofty Carr:  
Then lightly leaping down pursu'd the Blow;  
(XII 530-32)

Spenser's characters are often to be found "lightly leaping,"<sup>34</sup> as Pyrochles does when he tries to overthrow Sir Guyon:

Upon him lightly leaping without heed,  
Twixt his two mighty armes engrasped fast.  
(FQ II viii 49)

In his rendering of Virgil, Dryden has omitted certain "Circumstances"--the open plain (campo aperto), for instance, and the team of horses yoked together (equos biuigis):

hunc procul ut campo Turnus prospexit aperto  
ante levi iaculo longum per inane secutus,  
sistit equos biuigis et curru desilit atque.  
(XII 353-55)

Day Lewis, on the other hand, tries to keep each and every particular:



Eleven (831) of Camilla's death. The purpose of this repetition, according to R.D. Williams, is to make us see that Turnus like Camilla "wins our sympathy in defeat."<sup>35</sup> In his own account of Turnus' death, Dryden, like Virgil, repeats "the same old words" which he "had us'd before" (III, 1058).

The streaming Blood distain'd his Arms around:  
And the disdainful Blood came rushing thro' the Wound.  
(XII 1376-77)

These words recall, however, not the death of Camilla, but the death of Mezentius:

The Crimson Stream distain'd his Arms around,  
And the disdainful Soul came rushing thro' the Wound.  
(X 1312-13)

It is out of choice, I think, rather than necessity that Dryden puts before us, in duplicated terms, the two most formidable opponents of Aeneas. In each instance, a collocation of like sounds ("distain'd" and "disdainful"), or paranomasia, supports the idea that death dissolves the union between body and soul. This pattern of iteration, which a modern reader may find stiff and artificial, is a far cry from the simple pathos of Humphries' rendering ("the spirit / Went with a moan indignant to the shadows"). If we understand, however, the complex process of assimilation that has gone into the making of these couplets, we may appreciate, perhaps, the kind of epic grandeur which Dryden is trying to achieve. The phrase "disdainful Soul" comes from Book Two of The Faerie Queene, where Prince Arthur slays the Carle, Impatience:

Twixt his two mightie armes him up he snatcht,  
And crusht his carkasse so against his brest,  
That the disdainfull soule he thence dispatcht,  
And th'idle breath all utterly exprest.

(II xi 42)

That other phrase, "disdain'd around," Dryden seems to have taken from an entirely different context, where Spenser describes the "griesly Wound" of Amavia:

From which forth gusht a streme of gorebloud thick,  
That all her goodly garments staind around,  
And into a deepe sanguine dide the grassie ground.

(II i 39)

Day Lewis was right: Dryden "did very largely create his own grand manner"; it is also, however, with a little help from Spenser that we have this grim impression of Mezentius and Turnus, "distain'd" and yet "disdainful" even in defeat.

iii

Dryden claimed, in his Dedication, that "Virgil in Latine, and Spencer in English, have been my Masters" (III, 1048).<sup>36</sup> Though he does not so publicly give him credit, another influence, equally important, was that of Milton: "No Man has so happily Copy'd the Manner of Homer; or so copiously translated . . . the Latin Elegancies of Virgil" (Discourse concerning Satire, II, 610). Given Dryden's way with Spenser, it is not surprising that many of the Latin elegancies which Milton, "the Poetical Son of Spenser" (IV, 1445), so copiously translated should enter into Dryden's own translation of Virgil. These imitations may range, as one critic has said of Pope's Miltonic imitations, "from overt allusion to the barest hint."<sup>37</sup>



One overt allusion to Milton occurs in the Proem to the Georgics. Here is Dryden's version of Virgil's invocation to Augustus Caesar:

And chiefly thou, whose undetermin'd State  
Is yet the Business of the Gods Debate.  
(I 30-31)

This is the language from which Dryden was translating:

tuque adeo, quem mox quae sunt habitura deorum  
concilia, incertum est.  
(I 24-25)

And the Miltonic passage on which he was drawing as well:

And chiefly Thou O Spirit, that dost prefer  
Before all Temples th'upright heart and pure,  
Instruct me, for Thou know'st.  
(PL I 17-19)<sup>38</sup>

"Dryden's gifts," says Christopher Ricks, "were never more truly exhibited than when, with dignity and without presumption, he recognized Milton's genius by making it serve his purposes in allusion."<sup>39</sup> One purpose served by this allusion is to provide a kind of tonic equilibrium between reverence ("And chiefly thou") on the one hand and irreverence ("Business of the Gods Debate") on the other. The translator tries to be respectful of Virgil and, at the same time, somewhat skeptical ("undetermin'd State") about his apotheosis of Octavian.<sup>40</sup> The ambiguous tone of Dryden's panegyric may be compared with C. Day Lewis's lines:

You too, whatever place in the courts of the Immortals  
Is soon to hold you--whether an overseer of cities  
And warden of earth you'll be--

where the only irony I detect lies in the Hardyesque phrase,  
"courts of the Immortals."

A popular genre piece throughout the seventeenth century was a passage from the Second Georgic:<sup>41</sup>

O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint,  
agricolas! quibus ipsa, procul discordibus armis,  
fundit humo facilem victum iustissima tellus.  
(458-60)

Abraham Cowley's translation, which Dryden knew and admired, runs as follows:

O happy, (if his happiness he knows)  
The Country Swain! on whom kind Heav'n bestows  
At home all Riches that wise Nature needs;  
Whom the just Earth with easie plenty feeds.<sup>42</sup>

It was Dryden's opinion that "Mr. Cowley's praise of a Country Life is Excellent; but 'tis rather an imitation of Virgil, than a Version" (Postscript to the Aeneis, III, 1426). Despite some similarity in phrasing, Dryden comes a good deal closer than Cowley does to the spirit of the original:

Oh happy, if he knew his happy State!  
The Swain, who, free from Business and Debate,  
Receives his easy Food from Nature's Hand,  
And just Returns of cultivated Land!  
(639-42)

Cowley, we should note, omits two important circumstances: the threat of warfare (discordibus armis) which lies on the periphery (procul) of Virgil's vignette; and the sheer hard work as a reward for which Nature provides an easy sustenance (facilem victum). This latter idea is implicit in the epithet iustissimus ("Earth is most just," says L.P. Wilkinson, "because it repays in full the labor put into it").<sup>43</sup> In fairness to Cowley, it must be said that it is not part of his program to include such discordant elements. Dryden, on the other hand (through "Business and Debate"--

debate in the sense of "strife" or "struggle"--and through "just Returns of cultivated Land"), tempers, like Virgil, his praise of the country life with a touch of realism. The phrase "happy State," a recurrent motif in Paradise Lost,<sup>44</sup> introduces yet another sobering element. Dryden, who knew that Milton's subject is "the losing of our Happiness" (II, 610), recalls, I think, a specific moment in that poem--when the narrator addresses Adam and Eve:

Sleep on,  
Blest pair; and O yet happiest if ye seek  
No happier state, and know to know no more.  
(IV 773-75)

Dryden's reminiscence ("O happy, if he knew his happy State") associates the precarious happiness of Virgil's husbandman with that of all mankind.

The Miltonic injunction ("Sleep on, / Blest pair") also found expression in the closing lines of Dryden's All for Love:

Sleep, blest pair,  
Secure from human chance, long ages out,  
While all the storms of fate fly o'er your tomb.  
(V 514-16)

It is the Egyptian priest, Serapion, who addresses this eulogy, and the force of his injunction is altogether different from that of Milton. Only in the "sleep" of death do Anthony and Cleopatra find security "from human chance"--such is their blessing, and such their "happy State."<sup>45</sup>

To appreciate, more fully, the kind and quality of Dryden's Miltonic echoes, let us turn to the Aeneid, and in particular to Book Four where Virgil, with his usual tact,

leaves to our imagination the details of the seduction scene:

ille dies primus leti primusque malorum  
causa fuit.

(169-70)

Both Mandelbaum and Fitzgerald attempt to reproduce Virgil's emphatic repetition (primus . . . primusque):

That day was the first day of death and sorrow.  
(Mandelbaum)

That day was the first cause of death, and first  
Of sorrow.  
(Fitzgerald)

Neither of them enjoys, however, the resonance of Dryden, who turns this "marriage" of Dido and Aeneas into a crime of the first magnitude:

From this ill Omend Hour, in Time arose  
Debate and Death, and all succeeding woes.  
(245-46)

To find a reason for Dryden's greater strength we have only to remember again the words and cadences of Milton. Here, the related context is that original transgression, which

Brought Death into the World, and all our woe.  
(PL I 3)

The presence of Milton may also help explain the way Dryden renders ille dies; "this ill Omend Hour" is not unlike that other "evil Hour" (PL IX 780-81), when Eve reached forth "to the Fruit" and plucked and ate.

The banquet scene in Book One is yet another place where Milton may be said to "enter" Dryden's poem:

The Queen, already sate  
Amidst the Trojan Lords, in shining State,  
High on a Golden Bed: Her Princely Guest  
Was next her side, in order sate the rest.  
(977-80)

It is hard to think of Dido, seated in this manner ("in shining State, / High on a Golden Bed"), and not recall the seating of another monarch:

High on a Throne of Royal State, which farr  
Outshon the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,  
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand  
Shows on her Kinds Barbaric Pearl and Gold,  
Satan exalted sat.

(PL II 1-5)<sup>46</sup>

The point of this echo can best be gathered by examining the text of Virgil which Dryden is translating:

auleis iam se regina superbis  
aurea composuit sponda mediamque locavit,  
iam pater Aeneas et iam Troiana iuventus  
conveniunt, stratoque super discumbitur ostro.  
(I 697-700)

Save for the "Golden Bed" (aurea sponda), Dryden has subdued almost every decorative feature, even the "sumptuous tapestries" (auleis superbis) and "purple coverlets" (stratoque ostro). Dryden has also taken the liberty of changing the very disposition of the scene--a liberty that modern translators would never allow themselves.

Fitzgerald, for example, has

He [Cupid] found the queen amid magnificence  
Of tapestries, where she had placed herself  
In the very center, on a golden couch.  
The Father Aeneas and the Trojan company  
Came in to take their ease on crimson cloth.

By raising Dido to a point of eminence (in the "midst" of "Lords"), by placing Aeneas "next her side" (with the others ranked "in order" around them), Dryden suggests, it seems to me, something of the exalted and elaborate ceremony of Satan's "Consultation." No colorless abstraction, the phrase "shining State" summons up the spurious splendor of



rhythm, midway through this passage, in order to catch the slow spondaic movement of the Latin: stabānt ōrāntēs prīmī trāsmittēre cursum ("There they stand, a host, imploring").

By means of Milton, Dryden makes an even more emphatic change in meaning and in rhythm:

Thick as the Leaves in Autumn strow the Woods:  
Or Fowls, by Winter forc'd, forsake the Floods,  
And wing their hasty flight to happier Lands:  
Such, and so thick, the shiv'ring Army stands:  
And press for passage with extended hands.  
(428-32)

This much condensed version of the Latin original incorporates not one but two Miltonic echoes, the second of which ("Such, and so thick") recapitulates the point of the comparison in a manner similar to that of Milton, who thus declares:

So thick bestrown  
Abject and lost lay these, covering the Flood.  
(311-12)

To enhance the relevance of his simile, Dryden takes the epithet frigidus and forms from it a new poetic compound ("the shiv'ring Army"); this "Army" of lost souls has been driven, like Satan's "Legions," from the "happy Realms of Light" (PL I 83) above. Such, I think, is the force of Dryden's substitution, in line 430, of "happier" for apricis. In making English poetry out of Latin, Dryden practices a method of "verbal reconstitution" similar to that of Pope. As Norman Callan describes the process of re-creation, "he takes the constituent elements of a passage" and "weaves them into a new pattern, which substantially retains the sense of the original" (TE, VII, xcii). We can

see this process at work in the closing line ("And press for passage with extended Hands"), where a range of related meaning converges on the verb "press": "entreat" (orantes), "crowd together" (glomerantur), and "push forward" (those in front will be the first, primi, to go). There is one constituent element (ripae ulterioris amore) which appears to have found no place in Dryden's rendering--that "longing" (as Humphries calls it) "for the farther shore." And yet the idea, however, if not the sense of "longing" seems implicit in the placement of that lingering image: "with extended Hands."

The following couplet from Book Ten shows, once again, how Dryden looks at Virgil through Miltonic lenses, keeping his eye on the original:

Halesus came, fierce with desire of Blood,  
(But first collected in his Arms he stood)  
(577-78)

The words he translates are

sed bellis acer Halesus  
tendit in adversos seque in sua colligit arma,  
(411-12)

but the parenthetical statement ("collected in his Arms he stood") recalls, in addition, another contest--that moment when Satan, in his encounter with Gabriel,

Collecting all his might dilated stood.  
(PL IV 986)

The martial metaphor (seque in sua colligit arma) means "to gather oneself behind one's shield," and it reappears in Book Twelve, where Aeneas shields himself against the oncoming spear of Messapus: et se collegit in arma /



poplite subsidens (491-92). On this occasion, Dryden gives full expression to the sense of the original:

Aeneas saw it come, and stooping low  
Beneath his Buckler, shunn'd the threatening blow.  
(XII 713-14)

Unlike Aeneas, Halesus fails to use his shield to good advantage; while protecting a friend, he exposes his own breast to the spear of Pallas. Thus the grandeur of his pose ("collected in his Arms he stood") proves, in the end, as vain and ineffectual as that of Satan.

At the end of the council scene in Book Eleven, Dryden ascribes to Turnus this parting gesture:

He said, and turning short, with speedy Pace,  
Casts back a scornful Glance, and quits the place.  
(701-02)

A similar gesture is ascribed to Abdiel at the end of Book Five in Paradise Lost:

And with retorted scorn his back he turnd  
On those proud Towrs to swift destruction doomd.  
(906-07)

It is Milton, I think, who gave Dryden the idea that instead of "leaping up" (corripuit sese, as Virgil puts it), Turnus should turn his back on the assembly with a glance of scorn:

nec plura locutus  
corripuit sese et tectis citus extulit altis.  
(XI 461-62)

No more he spake, but up he sprang, and sped  
swiftly forth from the high halls.  
(Fairclough)

Although Virgil does not mention "scorn" per se, it is the essence of that long harangue in response to Drances (378-467) and of that brief retort to the Latin populace (359-61). As characters, Turnus and Abdiel have nothing in

common, save for their dramatic exits; the "inter-epic link" (to borrow a phrase from William Frost)<sup>48</sup> emphasizes the fact, however, that each man is a lone dissenter: Turnus among the peace party, Abdiel "among the faithless, faithful, onely hee" (V 897). It is Milton, moreover, who supplied Dryden with the words, "He said, and" (nec plura locutus), a narrative device employed by Rafael:

He said, and as the sound of waters deep  
Hoarce murmur echo'd to his words applause.  
(V 872-73)

(This formula occurs again in Book VI 719-20: "He said, and on his Son with Rayes direct / Shon full.") In the narrow compass of one heroic couplet, Dryden thus accommodates something of Milton's epic manner and something of his poetic meaning--all this in a plain and natural literary idiom wherein Turnus, instead departing "swiftly forth from the high halls," simply "quits the Place."

iv

The poet who could draw so freely and frequently on the work of his great predecessors, Milton and Spenser, could also make a levy on his own previous work. In his verse epistle, To my Dear Friend Mr. Congreve (1694), Dryden wrote:

Well, then; the promis'd hour is come at last;  
The present Age of Wit obscures the Past:  
(1-2)

In the Ninth Aeneid, Dryden recasts this pithy phrase ("the promis'd hour") and puts it into the mouth of Turnus:

"Their [the Trojans] promis'd Hour is pass'd, and mine remains" (167). The purpose of this echo is to make even more emphatic the contrast in the Latin between the opposing destinies of Turnus and the Trojans: sunt et mea contra / fata mihi (136-37). There is nothing very pointed about Mandelbaum's version:

And I  
have my own fates to set against their own.

Dryden's reminiscence serves a further purpose. The tone of his original poem is one of magnanimous acceptance (he treats the young and gifted Congreve like a brother, not a rival, poet); the tone of Turnus, however, is one of arrogant defiance, to which Dryden gives an extra-grating edge ("their promis'd Hour is pass'd") all his own.

Later in this speech, Turnus tries to rally his men by asking (vis à vis the Trojans):

Can they securely trust their feeble Wall,  
A slight Partition, a thin Interval,  
Betwixt their Fate and them;  
(178-80)

Here, Dryden is reworking a celebrated passage from Absolom and Achitophel (1681):

Great Wits are sure to Madness near ally'd;  
And thin Partitions do their Bounds divide:  
(163-64)

These later verses may have been composed in Dryden's "declining Years" (III, 1424), yet they seem as good, perhaps even a better piece of writing than that earlier couplet (with its passive construction "are sure . . . ally'd" and its unemphatic expletive "do").<sup>49</sup> To represent, for instance, the feebleness of the Trojan rampart, Dryden

juxtaposes two metrically contrasting verses--one with regular, the other with irregular stresses ("A slight Partition, a thin Interval"), where the faltering rhythm threatens to collapse in the terminal pyrrhic ("Interval"). Dryden gives this idea further support by repeating, in close succession, the same accented vowel (from "Partition" to "betwixt"), an acoustical device which, Percy Adams tells us, Pope would often use "to diminish his objects, to make them insignificant."<sup>50</sup> Turnus, too, wants to diminish his objects, to make them (rhetorically speaking) as insignificant as possible. To this end, he erects, as it were, the thinnest of acoustical barriers between "Interval" and "thin" (words bound together by the same homophone, "in"). Such poetry deserves close attention for its own sake, but also for the light it throws on Virgil, whose "Verse," according to Dryden, "is every where sounding the very thing in your Ears, whose Sence it bears" (Preface to Sylvae, I, 392):

quibus haec fiducia valli  
fossarumque morae, leti discrimina parva  
dant animos?

(IX 142-44)

They get their courage from a wall between us,  
Ditches to put us off-a paltry space  
From massacre for them.

(Fitzgerald)

There may be greater immediacy in Fitzgerald's rendering (compare his concrete "massacre" with Dryden's abstract "Fate"); there is much greater richness and complexity, however, in the way Dryden responds to the sense of that "sounding" phrase, discrimina parva.

The style and spirit of earlier poets, as the examples I have discussed should suggest, pervades the work of Dryden; time and again, moreover, throughout his Aeneid Dryden also demonstrates his own growth as a poet. We shall see in the following chapters how the discipline of verse translation can stimulate the production of original poetry.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Samuel Johnson, Lives of the Poets, ed. G.B. Hill, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), II, 204-05.

<sup>2</sup>William Frost estimates that "translations make up approximately two-thirds of all his poetry." See Dryden and the Art of Translation (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1955), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>The Scriblerian and the Kit Cats, XIV, 2 (1982), 126.

<sup>4</sup>The Poems of John Dryden, ed. James Kinsley, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958). All references to Dryden's poetry are to this edition. Volume and page number will be indicated thus: (III, 1055).

<sup>5</sup>"Preface to The Iliad," The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope, vol. VII, eds. Maynard Mack, Norman Callan, Robert Fagles, William Frost, and Douglas M. Knight (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967), 22. Subsequent references to this edition will be indicated by the abbreviation TE.

<sup>6</sup>"The Proper Study of Husbandry: Dryden's Translation of the Georgics," Restoration, VI, 2 (1982), 94.

<sup>7</sup>Dryden's Aeneid and Its Seventeenth Century Predecessors (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1960). In a recent essay, William Frost has shown that "from Gavin Douglas in 1513 to John Dryden in 1697 between fifty and sixty British translators completed versions of all or part of Virgil." See "Translating Virgil, Douglas to Dryden: Some General Considerations," in Poetic Traditions of the English Renaissance, eds. Maynard Mack and George de Forest Lord (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1982), pp. 271-86.

<sup>8</sup>John Dryden: A Survey and Bibliography of Critical Studies, eds. David J. Latt and Samuel H. Monk (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1976), p. 100.

<sup>9</sup>Review of Dryden's Aeneid, by Leslie Proudfoot, Philological Quarterly, V (1962), 67.

<sup>10</sup>Review of Proudfoot, Classical Philology, LVII (1962), 120.

<sup>11</sup>Dryden and the Art of Translation, p. 61.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>14</sup>Proudfoot, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup>The Aeneid of Virgil, trans. C. Day Lewis (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1952), p. vii.

<sup>16</sup>Sir Walter Scott, The Life of John Dryden, ed. Bernard Kreissman (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1963), pp. 325-42; George Saintsbury, Dryden (1881; rpt. London: Macmillan, 1902), pp. 145-50; E.M.W. Tillyard, The English Epic and Its Background (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954), pp. 478-81; Reuben Brower, Mirror on Mirror: Translation, Imitation, Parody (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1974), pp. 40-45; Luke Milbourne, Notes on Dryden's Virgil, in a Letter to a Friend, With an Essay on the Same Poet (London, 1698). For a recent sympathetic treatment, see Robert H. Bell, "Dryden's Aeneid as English Augustan Epic," Criticism, XIX (Winter 1977), 34-50. For a negative assessment, see Michael West, "Dryden's Ambivalence as a Translator of Heroic Themes," Huntington Library Quarterly, XXXVI (August 1973), 347-66. For a fuller account of Dryden's reputation as a translator, see William Frost, pp. 4-5.

<sup>17</sup>Van Doren, John Dryden: A Study of his Poetry (1920; rpt. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1960), p. 56.

<sup>18</sup>In his Discourse concerning Satire (1693), Dryden adopts a different position: "The common way which we have taken, is not a literal Translation, but a kind of paraphrase; or somewhat which is yet more loose, betwixt a Paraphrase and Imitation" (II, 668). For a good discussion of the changes in Dryden's ideas on translation, see Maurice J. O'Sullivan, "Running Division on the Groundwork: Dryden's Theory of Translation," Neophilologus, LXIV (1980), 144-59.

<sup>19</sup>Virgil, ed. and trans. H.R. Fairclough, 2 vols., The Loeb Classical Library (1918; rpt. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1954). All references to Virgil's works are to this edition.

<sup>20</sup>The Aeneid, trans. Frank O. Copley, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1975).

<sup>21</sup>H.A. Mason, To Homer Through Pope (London: Chatto and Windus, 1972), p. 119.

<sup>22</sup>The Aeneid of Virgil, ed. R.D. Williams, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1972), I, 367.

<sup>23</sup>Proudfoot (p. 80) locates one Miltonic echo; Frost (Dryden and the Art of Translation, p. 43) discusses a combined reminiscence of Milton and Spenser. On the presence of Milton in Dryden's Virgil, Anne Davidson Ferry is completely silent: Milton and the Miltonic Dryden (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1968).

<sup>24</sup>Van Doren, p. 105.

<sup>25</sup>Proudfoot, p. 184.

<sup>26</sup>The Works of Edmund Spenser, eds. Greenlaw, Osgood, Padelford, 10 vols. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1932-1957). All references to Spenser are to this edition.

<sup>27</sup>Kenneth Quinn, Virgil's Aeneid: A Critical Description (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1968), p. 41.

<sup>28</sup>TE, IV, 177.

<sup>29</sup>See FQ I vi 30; III xii 32; III iv 52.

<sup>30</sup>The Aeneid of Virgil, trans. Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Bantam Books, 1972).

<sup>31</sup>Williams, I, 131.

<sup>32</sup>The Aeneid of Virgil, trans. Rolfe Humphries (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951).

<sup>33</sup>The Aeneid: Virgil, trans. Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Random House, 1981).

<sup>34</sup>See FQ I viii 7; III v 7; III vii 25; III vii 33.

<sup>35</sup>Williams, II, 381.

<sup>36</sup>"The idea of Virgilian Spenser," says Earl Miner, "lies beyond my powers to explicate in any meaningful, detailed way." See "Dryden's Admired Acquaintance, Mr. Milton," Milton Studies, ed. J.D. Simmonds, vol. XI (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1978), p. 18. More than fifty years ago, Merritt Hughes explicated, in close detail, Spenser's stylistic imitations of Virgil: "Virgil and Spenser," University of California Publications in English, II (1929), 263-418. In her recent book, Literary Transvaluation: From Virgilian Epic to Shakespearean

Tragicomedy, Barbara J. Bono also discusses the idea of Virgilian Spenser (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1984), pp. 61-79.

<sup>37</sup>Aubrey Williams, The Dunciad: A Study of its Meaning (London: Methuen, 1955), p. 131.

<sup>38</sup>The Poetical Works of John Milton, ed. Helen Darbyshire, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952). All references to Milton are to this edition.

<sup>39</sup>Ricks, "Allusion: The Poet as Heir," Studies in the Eighteenth Century, eds. R.F. Brissendon and J.C. Eade, vol. III (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1973), 231.

<sup>40</sup>According to L.P. Wilkinson, "this is the first literary document to support the idea of the divinity of a living ruler at Rome." See The Georgics of Virgil: A Critical Survey (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969), p. 163.

<sup>41</sup>The definitive treatment of this important topos is Maren-Sofie Røstvig's The Happy Man, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Oslo: Norwegian Univ. Press, 1962). For Dryden's contribution, see I, 237-48.

<sup>42</sup>Essays, Plays, and Sundry Verses, ed. A.R. Waller (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1906), p. 409.

<sup>43</sup>Wilkinson, p. 144.

<sup>44</sup>Variations on this phrase occur several times in Paradise Lost (I 29; II 24-25; IV 518-20; V 503-05; V 826-31; VII 631-32; IX 337-39; IX 344-38). In her account of "the happy man" tradition, Røstvig does not mention that avowed Virgilian, Edmund Spenser; yet it was Spenser who developed Virgil's theme in such a way as to make it available to later poets like Milton and Dryden. Thus Calidore addresses Meliboe:

How much (sayd he) more happie is the state,  
In which ye father here do dwell at ease,  
Leading a life so free and fortunate,  
From all the tempests of these worldly seas.

(EQ VI ix 19)

<sup>45</sup>All for Love, ed. David Vieth, Regents Restoration Drama Series (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska, 1972).

<sup>46</sup>Dryden imitates this passage of Milton in Mac Flecknoe (106-07) and in his verse epistle, To my Dear Friend Mr. Congreve (51-53).

<sup>47</sup>R.D. Williams, I, 210.



<sup>48</sup>TE, VII, cxxxi.

<sup>49</sup>In his revision of this couplet in the Essay on Man, Pope studiously avoids both the passive construction and the expletive:

Remembrance and Reflection how ally'd;  
What thin partitions Sense from Thought divide.  
(Epistle I, 224-25)

<sup>50</sup>Adams, Graces of Harmony: Alliteration, Assonance, and Consonance in Eighteenth Century Poetry (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1977), p. 111.

## CHAPTER TWO

### "AN AMBITIOUS ORNAMENT OUT OF SEASON"

Not everyone in Dryden's day admired the epic similes of Homer and Virgil. Some critics, in fact, felt that these comparisons served no other purpose but to distract the reader from the matter at hand. Such was the opinion of the French critic, Charles de Marguetel de Saint-Denis, known better by the name of St. Évremond. In an essay Sur les Poèmes des Anciens (1685), Évremond wrote:

Quelque fois les comparaisons nous tirent  
des objects qui nous occupent le plus, par  
la vaine image d'un autre object, qui fait  
mal à propos une diversion.<sup>1</sup>

Dryden explains, in his Dedication, why "this Accusation . . . touches Virgil less than any" poet:

This I have observ'd of his Similitudes in  
general, that they are not plac'd, as our  
unobserving Criticks tell us, in the heat of any  
Action: But commonly in its declining: When he  
has warm'd us in his Description, as much as he  
possibly can; then, lest that warmth should  
languish, he renews it by some apt Similitude,  
which illustrates his Subject, and yet palls not  
his Audience.

(III, 1037)

It is characteristic of Dryden, the literary critic, to couch his comments in language that is teasingly figurative. Thus the verb "illustrates" recovers its original meaning (to make bright or clear) by association with the related terms "heat" and "warmth" and by antithetical contrast with

the verb "palls," which also recovers its original meaning (to spread darkness or gloom). An examination of passages from Books One, Seven, and Eight will show how Dryden puts his critical insight into poetic practice.

Virgil "warms you by Degrees," says Dryden in his Preface to the Fables (IV, 1449), and we can see this process at work in the following vignette, where Aeneas and Achates survey, from a hill top, the city of Carthage:

Corripuere viam interea, qua semita monstrat.  
iamque ascendebant collem, qui plurimus urbi  
imminet adversasque aspectat desuper arces. (420)  
miratur molem Aeneas, magalia quondam,  
miratur portas strepitumque et strata viarum.  
instant ardentes Tyrii, pars ducere muros  
molirique arcem et manibus subvolvere saxa,  
pars optare locum tecto et concludere sulco; (425)  
iura magistratusque legunt sanctumque senatum;  
hic portus alii effodiunt, hic alta theatri  
fundamenta locant alii, immanisque columnas  
rupibus excidunt, scaenis decora alta futuris.  
qualis apes aestate nova per florea rura (430)  
exercet sub sole labor, cum gentis adultos  
educunt fetus, aut cum liquentia mella  
stipant et dulci distendunt nectare cellas,  
aut onera accipiunt venientum, aut agmine facto  
ignavum fucos pecus a praesepebus arcent; (435)  
fervet opus redolentque thymo fragrantia mella,  
"o fortunati, quorum iam moenia surgunt!"  
Aeneas ait et fastigia suscipit urbis.  
infert se saeptus nebula (mirabile dictu)  
per medios miscetque viris necque cernitur ulli. (440)  
(I 418-440)

Meanwhile they have sped on the way where the pathway points. And now they were climbing the hill that looms large over the city and looks down on the confronting towers. Aeneas marvels at the massive buildings, mere huts once; marvels at the gates, the din and paved highroads. Eagerly the Tryians press on, some to build walls, to rear the citadel, and roll up stones by hand; some to choose the site for a dwelling and enclose it with a furrow. Laws and magistrates they ordain, and a holy senate. Here some are digging harbours, here others lay the deep foundations of their theatre and hew out of the cliffs vast columns, lofty adornments for the stage to be! Even as bees in

early summer, amid flowery fields, ply their task in sunshine, when they lead forth the full-grown young of their race, or pack the fluid honey and strain their cells to bursting with sweet nectar, or receive the burdens of incomers, or in martial array drive from their folds the drones, a lazy herd; all aglow is the work and the fragrant honey is sweet with thyme. "Happy they whose walls already rise!" cries Aeneas, lifting his eyes towards the city-roofs. Veiled in a cloud, he enters--wondrous to tell--through their midst, and mingles with the people, seen by none!

(Fairclough)

One way in which Virgil may be said to "warm us by degrees" is by skillfully shifting his tenses. Thus the perfect corripuere gives way to the imperfect ascendebant, which in turn gives way to the vivid present miratur, the repetition of which serves to magnify the rapt intensity of Aeneas' gaze. (This kind of repetition, at the beginning of successive verses, is what the rhetoricians call anaphora.) It is "one of Virgil's Beauties," so Dryden tells us in his Dedication of the Georgics, "that having said what he thought convenient, he always left somewhat for the imagination of his Readers to supply" (II, 914). The arrival of Aeneas, which takes up only one and a half lines of verse (418-19), is largely suggested (the reader must "supply" the details for himself), and for good reason: any further detail would divert our attention from the main subject, the marvels of Carthage (421-29). For Aeneas, these marvels become (in the words of one critic) "the ideal substitute for that unknown founding to which he can no longer urge himself."<sup>2</sup> It is the frustration born from seven years of wandering to which Aeneas gives vent when he cries out: "o fortunati, quorum iam moenia surgunt" (437).

To appreciate more fully how Virgil not only "warms us in his Description" but "renews" that warmth "by some apt Similitude," let us turn to Dryden's version of the same passage:

They climb the next Ascent, and, looking down, (580)  
 Now at a nearer Distance view the Town:  
 The Prince, with Wonder, sees the stately Tow'rs,  
 Which late were Huts, and Shepherds homely Bow'rs;  
 The Gates and Streets; and hears, from ev'ry part,  
 The Noise, and buisy Concourse of the Mart. (585)  
 The toiling Tyrians on each other call,  
 To ply their Labour: Some extend the Wall,  
 Some build the Citadel; the brawny Throng,  
 Or dig, or push unwieldy Stones along.  
 Some for their Dwellings chuse a Spot of Ground, (590)  
 Which, first design'd, with Ditches they surround.  
 Some Laws ordain, and some attend the Choice  
 Of holy Senates, and elect by Voice.  
 Here some design a Mole, while others there,  
 Law deep Foundations for a Theatre: (595)  
 From Marble Quarries mighty Columns hew,  
 For Ornaments of Scenes, and future view.  
 Such is their Toyl, and such their buisy Pains,  
 As exercise the Bees in flow'ry Plains;  
 When Winter past, and Summer scarce begun, (600)  
 Invites them forth to labour in the Sun:  
 Some lead their Youth abroad, while some condense  
 Their liquid Store, and some in Cells dispenche.  
 Some at the Gate stand ready to receive  
 The Golden Burthen, and their Friends relieve. (605)  
 All with united Force, combine to drive  
 The lazy Drones from the laborious Hive;  
 With Envy stung, they view each others Deeds;  
 The fragrant Work with Diligence proceeds.  
 Thrice happy you, whose Walls already rise; (610)  
Aeneas said; and view'd, with lifted Eyes,  
 Their lofty Tow'rs; then ent'ring at the Gate,  
 Conceal'd in Clouds, (prodigious to relate)  
 He mix'd, unmark'd, among the buisy Throng,  
 Born by the Tide, and pass'd unseen along. (615)  
 (580-615)

A passage which gets high marks from Proudfoot (he considers this "a fine example of the epic simile earning its keep in an animated, various, and telling description") calls, I think, for some analysis.<sup>3</sup> Dryden seems to have

recognized that the feelings of Aeneas ("Thrice happy you, whose Walls already rise") had to be expressed in terms an English audience could readily respond to. Knowingly and shrewdly, he modeled his description after certain scenes in Paradise Lost, where Satan commands a prospect of Eden. The reader may recall how Satan, in Book Three,

Looks down with wonder at the sudden view  
Of all this World at once.  
(542-43)

and how yet another prospect appears in Book Four:

Now to th' Ascent of that steep savage Hill  
Satan had journied on, pensive and slow;  
.  
.  
.  
Beneath him with new wonder now he views  
To all delight of human sense expos'd  
In narrow room Natures whole wealth.  
(172-73; 205-07)

From each of these excerpts, Dryden has taken something of Milton ("Looks down with wonder," "Now to th' ascent," "with new wonder now he views") that has entered into the texture, and thus the substance, of his verse translation:

They climb the next Ascent, and, looking down,  
Now at a nearer Distance view the Town:  
The Prince, with wonder, sees. . . .

The Miltonic echoes make an implicit comment, I think, on the "wonder" of Aeneas for a town which, for all its powerful appeal, is not the "destin'd Town" (I 6). The mediation of Milton has also brought about an important shift in narrative perspective. In Virgil it is the hill (collem) itself that looks down (aspectat desuper) over the city; in Dryden it is the observer, Aeneas, who does the seeing. Of a related passage in the Seventh Odyssey, Pope

remarks that Virgil "treads almost step by step in the path of Homer." Pope himself treads partly in the step of Dryden in depicting "the topography of this city of the Phaeacians":<sup>4</sup>

The chief with wonder sees th' extended streets,  
The spreading harbours, and the riding fleets;  
(VII 55-56)

Modern verse translators do not allow themselves the latitude that Dryden does. Consider this series of examples:

Meanwhile the two pressed on apace, where the track  
pointed.  
And now they were climbing a hill whose massive bulk  
looms over  
The city and commands a prospect of soaring towers.  
(Day Lewis)

And they went on, where the little pathway led them  
To rising ground; below them lay the city,  
Majestic buildings now, which one were hovels.  
(Humphries)

The two men meanwhile hurried down the path  
And soon were climbing the highest hill that hangs  
over the town and looks down on its walls.  
(Copley)

Meanwhile Aeneas and the true Achates  
press forward on their path. They climb a hill  
that overhangs the city, looking down,  
upon the facing towers.  
(Mandelbaum)

Meanwhile  
The two men pressed on where the pathway led,  
Soon climbing a long ridge that gave a view  
Down over the city and facing towers.  
(Fitzgerald)

Apart from certain differences in emphasis and phrasing, these writers show remarkable consistency, in that each tries to be as faithful as possible to the poetic form of the original. What Dryden says of the Italian translator, Hannibal Caro ("He is a Foot-Poet, he Lacquies by the side

of Virgil at the best, but never mounts behind him"), may have "the face of arrogance" (III, 1051), yet it holds true, and far too often, for our own translators as well. Dryden, we should note, takes the liberty of omitting line 418 (corripuere viam interea, qua semita monstrat). Despite this foreshortening of the original, he gives the reader a clearer sense of direction ("They climb the next Ascent") and place ("Now at a nearer Distance") than someone like Fitzgerald, who insists on telling us that "the two men pressed on where the pathway led." Dryden did not forget what Venus had already told the two men: perge modo et, qua te ducit via, dirige gressum (401).

No more Advice is needful, but pursue  
The Path before you, and the Town in view.  
(I 554-55)

None of these writers, moreover, quite manages to convey the cliff-hanging effect of that daring enjambment: qui plurimus urbi / imminet, though Day Lewis, to be sure, tries very hard ("a hill whose massive bulk looms over / The city"). "The Poet," says Dryden in his Dedication, "must have the Art to manage his few vowels to the best advantage," and he must "so dispose them as his present occasion requires" (III, 1046). On this occasion, Virgil so disposes his vowels that the pivotal words urbi and imminet share the same sound, thus drawing out the sense from one verse to the next. Dryden uses assonance for a similar purpose, linking together "down" and "Now" along with the suspended object of Aeneas' view, "the Town." ("He is thinking through the rhyme," Michael Wilding would say,



"using it for meaning.")<sup>5</sup> The resulting pause is a graceful English equivalent for a local effect in the Latin.

Like another literary epic (Paradise Lost), Dryden's Aeneid may be said to form "a huge web of anticipation and echo."<sup>6</sup> Witness the following couplet (582-83):

The Prince, with Wonder, sees the stately Tow'rs,  
Which late were Huts, and Shepherds homely Bow'rs.

Here Dryden looks forward to Aeneas' view of Pallanteum, the future site of Rome:

When they from far beheld the rising Tow'rs,  
The Tops of Sheds, and Shepherds lowly Bow'rs.  
(VIII 131-32)

This parallel is Dryden's own (in neither instance does Virgil mention "Shepherds homely" or "lowly Bow'rs"). The anticipation and the echo suggest, however, the melancholy reflection that civilizations rise and fall, that Carthage will one day be reduced to the mean condition of Evander's kingdom, a fate that lies in store for Rome as well (of course, this latter suggestion is Dryden's, not Virgil's).

There are many such proleptic lines and phrases (some, no doubt, fortuitous) in Dryden's poem, and there are many more in the original: "Even he [Virgil] himself" has "often repeated two or three whole Verses, which he had us'd before" (III, 1058). The entire bee simile is transplanted from a previous poem (Georgics IV 162-69), but I postpone this topic, for the time being, to show how Dryden, like his master Virgil, warms us in his description as much as he possibly can. His imagination sometimes catches fire from a single word, and thus strepitum here

becomes "The Noise, and buisy concourse of the Mart." So, too, his Tyrians, instead of simply working hard, as Virgil puts it (instant), "on each other call, / To ply their Labour." All this commotion Aeneas "hears" (this verb too is Dryden's addition), and hears more fully and completely than the Latin would seem to warrant. Dryden also "supplies" an especially vivid image for subvolvere (this "graphic compound," according to R.G. Austin, means "to roll up from below");<sup>7</sup> "the brawny Throng, / Or dig, or push unwieldy Stones along." The monosyllabic iambs ("Or dig, or push") are quite unwieldy, and for good reason; the heavy spondees of Virgil (mōlīrīque arcem et manibus subvolvere saxa), where ictus and accent clash with one another, also give the impression of strenuous effort. Dryden's tone varies from the colloquial ("brawny Throng") to the severely formal ("From Marble Quarries mighty Columns hew"), where parallel phrases are bound together by an interlocking pattern of alliteration; and at least one of his verses ("Lay deep Foundations for a Theatre") has been thought felicitous enough to be kept intact by later translators.<sup>8</sup>

"The general picture of the bee community," says one of Virgil's recent editors, "is more appropriate to the present scene than the detail is."<sup>9</sup> I doubt very much that Dryden would have shared this modern view; he seems, on the contrary, to do everything he can to make this similitude as apt as possible. The frequent repetition of the pronoun "some" (six times in the description and four times in the comparison) is evidence, I think, that Dryden perceived a

definite correspondence between the tenor (note the iterative pattern: pars . . . pars, hic . . . alii, hic . . . alii) and the vehicle (not the similar iterative pattern: cum . . . aut cum, aut . . . aut) of Virgil's vignette.

Such is their Toyl, and such their buisy Pains,  
As exercise the Bees in flow'ry Plains.

(598-99)

The gratuitous phrase, "buisy Pains," comes from Spenser's Faerie Queene; a stock expression, it occurs once in the description of the Cave of Mammon:

And every feend his busie paines applide,  
To melt the golden metall, ready to be tride.

(II vii 35)

And once again in Book Six (iii 28), where Sir Calepine rescues Serena:

So well he did his busie paines apply,  
That the faint sprite he did revoke againe.

Dryden employs the phrase for the local effect of onomatopoeia (the consonant sound [z] is repeated at the end of six accented syllables) and for the larger effect of structural unity. It is no accident, I think, that the same epithet ("buisy") occurs three times in this passage: at the beginning ("buisy Concourse"), the middle ("buisy pains"), and the end ("buisy Throng"). Line 598, with its anaphoric sequence "Such . . . , and such," echoes the conclusion of an earlier simile, where Virgil likened the labor of the bees to the Cyclops at their forge:

If little things with great we may compare,  
Such are the Bees, and such their busie Care:

(Georgics IV 256-57)

Modern readers may find it strange that Dryden avoids using the word "honey," despite the fact that the Latin has it twice (liquentia mella and fragrantia mella). In his Fourth Georgic, Dryden could write: "Sweet Honey some condense" (234); he offers here, however, the elegant variation: "Liquid Store," "Golden Burthen," and "fragrant Work." Periphrasis has been defined by Geoffrey Tillotson as a "kind of phrase [which] provides an excellent method of compression, especially since it is often an abstract and a concrete which are clashed together."<sup>10</sup> Dryden's use of this device (it was to become, says Tillotson, "one of the more prominent items in the poetic diction of the eighteenth century") is subtle and complex. Each phrase consists of an adjective-noun combination, the abstract nouns denoting closely related activities ("Store," "Burthen," "Work"), the modifiers naming different physical properties of the same substance--its peculiar texture ("Liquid"), appearance ("Golden"), and smell ("fragrant"). In sorting out and bringing together these various attributes, Dryden may be giving literary expression to Locke's well-known distinction between primary and secondary qualities. Although lovers of Virgil will no doubt miss the delicate scent of "honey sweet with thyme" (redolentque thymo fragrantia mella), there is ample compensation for this loss. To better appreciate Dryden's success, one need only compare the following version by Richard Maitland, the Earl of Lauderdale:

'Some purge the Heav'nly Nectar they condense,  
'And some the Liquid in void cells dispense.  
(464-65)

A certain editor (whose name we do not know) added this note to the second edition of Lauderdale's translation:

N.B. In this Edition the Reader will find what use Mr. Dryden made of this Translation: the lines marked thus " being entirely borrowed, and those marked thus ' with little Variation.<sup>11</sup>

That little variation can make a world of difference:

Some lead their Youth abroad, while some condense  
Their Liquid Store, and some in Cells dispense.  
(602-03)

The superiority of Dryden's couplet (where the action flows uninterrupted from one verse to the next) is obvious and revealing. The abstract and the concrete do not clash together in Lauderdale's periphrasis ("Heav'nly Nectar"), and his poetic diction ("in void cells dispense") is clumsy and confusing. The only thing, in fact, the two translators have in common is the same pair of end-rhymes ("condense"/"dispense").<sup>12</sup>

Ever since J.M. Bottkol's pioneering study, "Dryden's Latin Scholarship,"<sup>13</sup> critics have known that Dryden got a good deal of help from the "Dauphin's Virgil," an edition prepared in 1675 by Carolaeus Ruæus, "whom generally I follow," says Dryden in his Dedication (III, 1050). Ruæus is important for several reasons. Now and then what appears to be a blunder on Dryden's part is the result of his having followed a different text from the sort we find in a modern edition. Dryden will sometimes versify a gloss from the Notae of Ruæus, the extensive commentary which occupies the lower half of every page in the "Dauphin's Virgil." More often, however, he will take a hint from the Interpretatio,

the Latin prose translation which accompanies the text of Virgil. When Dryden writes, for instance, "some extend the Wall," he is rendering, not the Latin of Virgil (pars ducere muros), but the Latin of Ruaeus (pars extendere muros). Dryden's transformation of aestate nova (430) also shows the influence of Ruaeus, who offers the following paraphrase: aestate incipiente ("at the beginning of summer"). From this Dryden produces the remarkable line,

When Winter past, and Summer scarce begun,  
(600)

where the participle "scarce begun" (incipiente) gives rise to the antithetical and parallel phrase, "When Winter past." If, as Austin tells us, "the 'young summer' of the bees corresponds to the bright promise of the growing city,"<sup>14</sup> then Dryden makes that promise even brighter by contrasting it with what had gone before. (His verse is just as poignant as Shelley's: "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?").

There is another aspect of the bee community which Dryden sought to make appropriate to the present scene--the relevance of the "lazy Drones" (ignavum fucos pecus):

All, with united Force, combine to drive  
The lazy Drones from the laborious Hive;  
With Envy stung, they view each others Deeds;  
The fragrant Work with Diligence proceeds.  
(606-09)

This passage, like its Virgilian counterpart (434-36), comes directly from the Fourth Georgic (241-44), and Dryden seems to have realized the purpose of the transposition. The drones (who make no honey and live off the labor of others)

in some sense are akin to the Trojans (who do no work during their stay at Carthage) as the "laborious" bees are to the Carthaginians:

agmine facto  
ignavum fucos pecus a praesepebus arcent.  
(434-35)

[Some] closing ranks / Shoo the drones--that  
Work-shy gang--away from the bee-fold.  
(Day Lewis)

Dryden takes the military idiom, agmine facto (which Day Lewis renders as "closing ranks," Copley as "police the hive," Mandelbaum as lining up "in columns," and Fitzgerald as "like troops alerted"), and lifts it to Miltonic heights: "All, with united Force, combine to drive." The phrase "united Force" occurs twice in Paradise Lost, once when the host of Satan is said to move "In perfect Phalanx,"

Breathing united force with fixed thought;  
(I 560)

and once again when Satan asks

How such united force of Gods, how such  
As stood like these, could ever know repulse?  
(I 629-30)

The bold redundancy of "All," "united," and "combine" gives to the enjambling verb "drive" (note the repeated assonance of the vowel "i") the kind of impact we may find in the Latin, where by the time we reach arcent the drones are effectively "shut out." There is an understated, albeit understood, irony in the interpolated line, "With Envy stung, they view each others Deeds"; the quiet pun ("With Envy stung") takes in Aeneas, too, who is a long way from

establishing his own empire. In this connection, we may recall the attitude of another epic figure:

Such wonder seis'd, though after Heaven seen,  
The Spirit maligne, but much more envy seis'd  
At sight of all this World beheld so faire.

(PL III 552-54)

In no sense, of course, is Aeneas to be considered a "Spirit maligne," yet the influence of Milton can nonetheless be felt not only in Dryden's diction, but also in that complex unit of composition, the verse paragraph. A strong example of Dryden's Miltonic manner occurs in these concluding couplets:

then, ent'ring at the Gate,  
Conceal'd in Clouds, (prodigious to relate)  
He mix't, unmark'd, among the buisy Throng,  
Born by the Tide, and pass'd unseen along.

(612-15)

To some readers, Dryden's expansion of neque cernitur ulli to "unmark'd" and "unseen" will sound redundant; Milton, however, on a similar occasion is even bolder. Thus Uriel keeps an eye on Satan:

his gestures fierce  
He markd and mad demeanour, then alone,  
As he supposed, all unobserv'd, unseen.

(PL IV 128-30)

In each instance, redundancy (literally a verbal overflow) gives extra weight to an important moment. It is to Milton that Dryden owes the varied movement of his verse, the numerous pauses and modifying phrases which impede the progress of the sentence, up to the point where it uncoils itself in the final clause. Though I do not wish to strain the comparison, I do, however, wish to stress (along with William Frost) how often Dryden's "manipulations of literal





God who oft descends to visit men  
Unseen, and through thir habitations walks  
To mark thir doings.

(PL XII 48-50)

The Old Testament notion of the hidden god (deus absconditus) is implicit, I think, in Dryden's presentation of Aeneas, who ("Conceal'd in Clouds") walks "unseen" to mark the doings of the Carthaginians.

At the beginning of this passage, we found Aeneas looking down at the "stately Tow'rs" of Carthage; we find him, at the end, looking up (suscipit), viewing with "lifted Eyes" the "lofty Towr's." The consonantal rhyme of "lift" and "loft" forms a sympathetic bond between subject and object--a feeling which is reinforced by the collocation of like sounds. Such is the appeal of Carthage, Aeneas lets himself be "Born by the Tide" (note the inverted stress) and pass "unseen along." Such is Dryden's insight, his metaphor refers not only to the press of people from without but also to the overflow of feeling from within.

ii

In Book Seven, Virgil uses the epic simile for an entirely different purpose--to illustrate the dreadful frenzy of Amata. On the verge of madness, she tries to sway her husband from forming an alliance with the Trojan guest:

His ubi nequiquam dictis experta Latinum  
contra stare videt, penitusque in viscera lapsum  
serpentis furiale malum totamque pererrat, (375)  
tum vero infelix, ingentibus excita monstris,  
immensam sine more furit lymphata per urbem.

ceu quondam torto volitans sub verbere turbo,  
 quem pueri magno in gyro vacua atria circum  
 intenti ludo exercent (ille actus habena (380)  
 curvatis fertur spatiis; stupet inscia supra  
 inpubesque manus, mirata volubile buxum;  
 dant animos plagae), non cursu segnior illo  
 per medios urbes agitur populosque feroces.  
 quin etiam in silvis, simulato numine Bacchi, (385)  
 maius adorta nefas, maioremque orsa furorem,  
 evolat, et natam frondosis montibus addit,  
 quo thalamum eripiat Teucris taedasque moretur.  
 (373-88)

When, after such vain trial with words, she sees  
 Latinus stand firm against her--when the maddening  
 venom has glided deep into her veins and courses  
 through her whole frame--then, indeed, the  
 luckless queen, stung by monstrous horrors, in  
 wild frenzy rages from end to end of the city. As  
 at times a top, spinning under the twisted lash,  
 which boys intent on the game drive in a great  
 circle through an empty court--urged by the whip  
 it speeds on round after round; the puzzled,  
 childish throng hang over it in wonder, marvelling  
 at the whirling box-wood; the blows give it life;  
 so, with no course slacker, is she driven through  
 the midst of the cities and proud peoples. Nay,  
 feigning the spirit of Bacchus, essaying a greater  
 sin and launching a greater madness, forth she  
 flies to the forest, and hides her daughter in the  
 leafy mountains, thereby to rob the Teucrians of  
 their marriage and delay the nuptial torch.

(Fairclough)

Nothing could be more dramatic than the manner in which  
 Virgil represents this mounting hysteria. The poignant  
 phrase, tum vero infelix, marks the turning point whereupon  
 Amata begins to rage (furit) in earnest; the serpent's  
 poison (furiale malum), which drives her mad, in turn sets  
 in motion an even greater madness (maioremque orsa furorem).  
 The emotional crescendo starts with the adjective furiale,  
 proceeds through the verb furit, then reaches its peak in  
 the noun furorem--a progressive variation on the same theme.  
 The image of the spinning top does not so much divert as

redirect our attention to the main subject; an apt similitude (even to such particulars as actus habena and excita monstris, magno in gyro and immensam per orbem, fertur and agitur, volitans and evolat), it introduces the pueri intenti, fiendish in their fascination, as the diminutive counterparts of Juno and Allecto, the supernatural agents of Amata's destruction.

Dryden, like Virgil, does everything he can "to raise our concernments to the highest pitch" (III, 1036):

But when she saw her Reasons idly spent,  
And cou'd not move him from his fix'd Intent;  
She flew to rage; for now the Snake possess'd  
Her vital parts, and poison'd all her Breast; (525)  
She raves, she runs with a distracted pace,  
And fills, with horrid howls, the public Place.  
And, as young Striplings whip the Top for sport,  
On the smooth Pavement of an empty Court;  
The wooden Engine flies and whirls about, (530)  
Admir'd, with Clamours, of the Beardless rout;  
They lash aloud, each other they provoke,  
And lend their little Souls at ev'ry stroke:  
Thus fares the Queen, and thus her fury blows  
Amidst the Crowd, and kindles as it goes. (535)  
Nor yet content, she strains her Malice more,  
And adds new Ills to those contriv'd before:  
She flies the Town, and, mixing with a throng  
Of madding Matrons, bears the Bride along:  
Wand'ring through Woods and Wilds, and devious Ways, (540)  
And with these Arts the Trojan Match delays.  
(522-41)

While this version follows, with reasonable fidelity, "the undulations of the original,"<sup>16</sup> it also turns Amata into an altogether sinister figure, taking away what little pathos Virgil allowed her. No longer the unhappy (infelix) victim of hallucinations (ingentibus monstris),

She flew to rage; for now the Snake possess'd  
Her vital parts, and poison'd all her Breast;  
(524-35)

"Possess'd" has the meaning, more common in Dryden's day than in our own, of being "controlled" or "occupied" by an evil spirit. This pun is reinforced by assonance (the accented vowel of "poison'd" could be pronounced, in Dryden's day, to rhyme with that of "vital") and alliteration, which punctuates the progress of the spreading venom (throughout her "parts"). In the Latin, it is the wide separation of immensam and urbem which makes Amata seem to wander wildly from one end of the city to the other. Dryden employs the rhetorical scheme, asyndeton (the omission of conjunctions in successive phrases), for similar effect; thus the staccato feet ("She raves, she runs") mimic her "distracted pace"--distracted in the sense of being troubled and drawn apart (from detrahere). To such a pitch, in fact, is Amata carried, she becomes a kind of wailing demon, who "fills, with horrid howls, the public Place." Thick with sonic echoes (the alliterating doublets [h] and [p] and the consonant cluster [lz]), this verse attempts to imitate the long shrill note [u] that sounds in furit, lymphata, and urbem.

Almost any modern translator will cling more closely than Dryden does to the contours of the original. Mandelbaum, for instance, is at his best in fashioning an elegant periodic sentence that tapers, suddenly, to its climactic point:

But when she has tried these useless words and sees  
Latinus standing firm against her, when  
the serpent's maddening mischief has slid deep

within her bowels and traveled all her body,  
exciting her with monstrous fantasies,  
the wretched queen, indeed hysterical,  
rages throughout the city.

This rendering is skillful (the run-on line "slid deep / within" imitates the Latin nicely: viscera lapsum/serpentis) and musical (note the pointed alliteration of "maddening mischief" and of "bowels" and "body") as well. Even here, however, we are not far removed from Fairclough (cf. "she sees Latinus standing firm against her--when the maddening venom has glided deep into her veins"), to whom Mandelbaum, indeed, owes a good deal of his phrasing. A debt like this is about as close as our recent scholar-poets come to drawing on a common literary tradition; the texture of their verse translations is consequently rather thin. Never do they suggest, as Dryden so often does, the presence of Shakespeare, Milton, or Spenser. (Virgil, too, we should not forget, drew freely and frequently on the work of predecessors, especially the Latin poets Catullus, Lucretius, and Ennius.)

Let us see what happens when Dryden, in Nabokov's words, "remembers something read somewhere and uses it, recreates it in his own fashion."<sup>17</sup> The couplet that introduces the following simile,

And, as young Striplings whip the Top for Sport,  
On the smooth Pavement of an empty Court,  
(528-29)

is, to me at least, faintly reminiscent of another famous simile:

As flies to wanton boys, are we to th' gods,  
They kill us for their sport.

(King Lear IV i 37-38)

Instead of rendering intenti ludo in the usual manner (Day Lewis has "absorbed in their play," Copley "absorbed in play," Mandelbaum "when bent on play"), Dryden does something different; he gives us "for sport" (which may remind some readers, as it did me, of Gloucester's bitter speech) and uses it, recreates it, so that these "young Striplings," like Shakespeare's "wanton boys," incriminate those other pranksters, Juno and Allecto. The one translator who offers a phrase similar to Dryden's couches it in such a way as to preclude any suggestion of a literary echo:

One sees at times a top that a wound-up thong  
Snapped into a spin, when, all eyes for the sport,  
Boys drive it round a court in a great circle,  
Sweeping curves on the ground, flicked by the whip,  
While the small boys in fascination bend  
Around the rounded boxwood as it whirls,  
Giving new life at each stroke of the lash.

(Fitzgerald)

Ungainly syntax such as this is uncharacteristic of Fitzgerald at his best. Even if we parse the sentence, it is hard to see how the subordinating conjunctions "when" and "while" link up with the main clause ("One sees at times a top that"). It is anyone's guess whether "snapped" should be taken as a passive participle or an active verb (a present tense "snaps" would be much clearer), and the same ambiguity attends the participle "sweeping" (does it modify the boys or the top?). The needless repetition of "small boys" only adds to the confusion. As for the pointless

jingle, "Around the rounded boxwood," I cannot tell what purpose it may serve. When Dryden's "young Striplings whip the Top for sport," the plosive [p]'s, six in one couplet (not to mention the internal rhyme), impart the sort of impetus we may find, or imagine ourselves to find, in Virgil (torto volitans sub verbere turbo).

In the next couplet (530-31), the top becomes a "wooden Engine" (volubile buxum) that "flies and whirls about, / Admir'd, with Clamours, of the Beardless rout." Though, broadly speaking, any mechanical tool or instrument can be called an "engine," as a synonym for plot, contrivance, or snare, it also carries a darker connotation. So, in a later book, Turnus tells his troops: "No wooden Engine shall their Town betray" (IX 182). Dryden's "Beardless rout" gives extra force to Virgil's rather innocent expression, inpubesque manus, and this extra force (a new dimension, that of sound, is also introduced, "Clamours" corresponding to "horrid howls") explodes as

They lash aloud, each other they provoke,  
And lend their little Souls at ev'ry stroke:  
(532-33)

According to T.E. Page, the Latin (dant animos plagae) can be taken in one of two ways: either "the lashes give it vigor" or "flogging the top gives the boys spirit."<sup>18</sup> Favoring the former sense, Day Lewis offers "livelier at every blow," Humphries "driven by blows in this or that direction," Copley "lash it to life," Mandelbaum "each lash gives it life," and Fitzgerald (taking a hint from Dryden)



"Giving new life at each stroke of the lash." Dryden accommodates both interpretations at the same time, glancing first at one ("They lash aloud") and then the other ("each other they provoke"). There is a pun to be noticed here, for the literal meaning of "provoke" is to "call forth." Unlike other translators, Dryden's imagination enlarges on the wanton cruelty so soberly retrenched in Virgil's apposition of animos (one of whose lexical meanings is "passion") and plagae (the plural form denotes "a flogging"). Any claim to innocence that could be made on these youngsters' behalf is undercut by the epithet "little" (little in the sense of being "petty"); Virgil's epithet inscia is also double-edged (the boys are no less vicious for being ignorant). The acoustical echoes, moreover ("aloud" assonates with "rout" and "Souls" with "stroke"; "lash" alliterates with "lend" and "little"), make it resoundingly clear that inflicting pain is a source of sadistical pleasure. The idea of "lashing" as a sexual stimulant may seem perverse to us; it is well to recall, however, that lashing was, for generations, the customary form of corporal punishment in English public schools. The perverted and perverting energy of these "young Striplings" is of a piece with the self-tormented and tormenting fury of Dryden's Amata.

Some fifty years ago, F.O. Matthiessen identified "the use of a strong verb" as one of the stylistic features of Elizabethan translation.<sup>19</sup> The same kinetic energy,

carefully controlled, animates the verse of Dryden. At the beginning of this passage we are told that Amata cannot "move" Latinus "from his fix'd Intent" (consonance underscores the firmness of his stance); verbs of motion, thereupon, issue in such a torrent ("flew," "runs," "whip," "flies," "whirls," "lash," "fares," "blows," "kindles," "goes," "strains," "bears," "wand'ring") as to simulate her frantic flight. Virgil also has his verbs of motion (pererrat, furit, fertur, agitur, evolat), but Dryden's are more numerous and graphic. It remains for the final verb, held in reserve, to announce what possible motive there could be for all this action ("And with these Arts the Trojan Match delays").

Amata, in her Bacchic frenzy, resembles an emblematic character in Spenser's Fairie Queene. Here is how the wicked consort, Adicia, comes to grief:

Or as that madding mother, mongst the rout  
Of Bacchus Priests her owne deare flesh did teare  
. . . . .  
She forth did rome, whether her rage her bore  
With franticke passion, and with furie fraught;  
And breaking forth out at a posterne dore,  
Unto the wyld wood ranne, her dolours to deplore.  
(V viii 47-48)

The resemblance to Dryden's Amata is noteworthy not only because of the corresponding words ("madding," "rout," "rage," "furie"), but also because of a certain motif peculiar to the romance epic. When Adicia runs away to the "wyld Wood," she abandons every restraint ("And breaking forth"), and so it is with Amata:

She flies the Town, and, mixing with a throng  
Of madding Matrons, bears the Bride along:  
Wand'ring through Woods and Wilds, and devious ways.  
(538-40)

Lines 538-39 make a striking contrast to a couplet we encountered in Book One (614-15). Unlike Aeneas (who enters the "Town" of Carthage and who mixes and is "Born along" by a "Throng" of city-folk), Amata "flies the Town" (and, by implication, civilization as well). Her "Wand'ring through Woods and Wilds, and devious ways" may be, in one sense, a far cry from Virgil ("she flies to the forest," says Fairclough, "and hides her daughter in the leafy mountains"); in another sense, however, Dryden comes quite close to recreating Virgil's poetic syntax. The tortuous circuit of Amata's flight is suggested, in the Latin, by the separation of in silvis and evolat. Dryden conveys a similar impression by stretching to the limit his pentameter line with three consecutive "and's" (the rhetorical scheme is polysyndeton) and three alliterating nouns ("Woods," "Wilds," "ways"). The weak extra syllable in "devious," a word that can mean either roundabout or cunning, adds to this effect a wavering note of ambiguity--the purpose of which is to call attention to the method (simulato numine) in Amata's madness (furorem).

In treating what Dryden called these "secrets of Versification" (III, 1046), I am mindful of Dr. Johnson's warning: "It is scarcely to be doubted, that on many occasions we make the musick which we imagine ourselves to hear, that we modulate the poem by our own disposition, and

ascribe to the numbers the effects of the sense."<sup>20</sup> I am also mindful of the opposite and equally valid view, one which Dryden held to long before he undertook his translation of Virgil: namely, that "the very sound of his words has often somewhat that is connatural to the subject" (Preface to Annus Mirabilis, I, 48). Two things are "connatural" to each other if they seem to share the same origin or nature. In advocating this doctrine (perhaps too strong a term), Dryden is rejecting the subjectivist poetics put forth by Johnson. On many occasions we shall see how Dryden's words, like those of Virgil, have often somewhat that is connatural to their subject.

iii

In a letter to Walter Scott, Wordsworth once wrote that "whenever Virgil can be fairly said to have his eye upon his object, Dryden always spoils the passage."<sup>21</sup> To answer this charge, let us look at the following passage and see whether or not Dryden spoils what one critic has called the "most beautiful and original of Virgil's similes":<sup>22</sup>

Talia per Latinum. Quae Laomedontius heros  
cuncta videns magno curarum fluctuat aestu,  
atque animum nunc huc celerem, nunc dividit illuc,  
in partesque rapit varias, perque omnia versat:  
sicut aquae tremulum labris ubi lumen aenis  
sole repperctussum aut radiantis imagine Lunae,  
omnia pervolitat late loca, iamque sub auras  
erigitur summique ferit laquearia tecti.

(VIII 18-25)

Thus it was throughout Latium. And the hero of Laomedon's line, seeing it all, tosses on a mighty sea of troubles; and now hither, now thither, he

swiftly throws his mind, casting it in diverse ways,  
and turning it to every shift; as when in brazen  
bowls a flickering light from water, flung back by  
the sun or the moon's glittering form, flits far  
and wide o'er all things, and now mounts high and  
smites the fretted ceiling of the roof aloft.

(Fairclough)

According to Dryden:

While Turnus and th' Allies thus urge the War,  
The Trojan, floating in a Flood of Care,  
Beholds the Tempest which his Foes prepare.  
This way and that he turns his anxious Mind; (30)  
Thinks, and rejects the Counsels he design'd.  
Explores himself in vain, in ev'ry part,  
And gives no rest to his distracted Heart,  
So when the Sun by Day, or Moon by Night,  
Strike, on the polish'd Brass, their trembling Light, (35)  
The glitt'ring Species here and there divide;  
And cast their dubious Beams from side to side:  
Now on the Walls, now on the Pavement play,  
And to the Cieling flash the glaring Day.

(VIII 28-39)

Dryden, it is true, does omit one very important detail in  
this scene: the image of water (aquae) that makes the  
similitude such an apt reflection of Aeneas' state of mind  
as he lies "floating in a Flood of Care." We may regret  
losing the "basins full / of unstilled water" (Fitzgerald),  
yet still appreciate the poet's response to other aspects of  
Virgil's description. Note, for instance, how Dryden  
enlarges on the suggestive words, omnia pervolitat late  
loca:

Now on the Walls, now on the Pavement play,  
And to the Cieling flash the glaring Day.

(38-39)

If Dryden can sketch in physical features like these  
("Walls" and "Pavement"), which Virgil left deliberately  
vague, he can also "be fairly said to have his eye upon his  
object."

One device that Dryden uses to capture his object is the periphrastic doublet. "Glitt'ring Species," "dubious Beams," and "glaring Day," all are variations on a single phrase in the Latin, tremulum lumen. Is Dryden trying to outdazzle Virgil, much as Pope tried to outdo Homer in his famous "Night Piece?" Perhaps so. At any rate, in presenting these various visual impressions, Dryden follows a procedure much like the one he used in dealing with the simile of the bees, where he fashioned a series of parallel expressions for the honey of the hive. Here, too, he joins together adjective and noun to glance at different properties ("glittering," "dubious," "glaring") and different aspects ("Species," "Beams," "Day") of the same substance ("Light"). In this context, "Species" does not mean what it commonly did in seventeenth-century English ("external form or appearance"); instead, it has the precise technical sense of "reflection" or "the image of something as cast upon, or reflected from a surface" (OED). And as with "devious" in the previous excerpt, the weak extra syllable in "dubious" makes for some uncertainty--not only in the meter but in the mind of the man whose very thoughts are "dubious" and uncertain.

In the opening lines of an original poem, Religio Laici, Dryden employed some of this same imagery ("Moon," "Light," "Beams," "Day") to illustrate the difference between the light of reason and the light of faith:

Dim as the borrow'd beams of Moon and Stars  
To lonely, weary, wandering Travellers,

Is Reason to the Soul: And as on high,  
Those rowling Fires discover but the Sky  
Not light us here; So Reason's glimmering Ray  
Was lent, no to assure our doubtful way,  
But guide us upward to a better Day.

(1-7)

Reminiscence of Religio Laici is appropriate here, since Aeneas too is a wandering traveler who can no more rely on the "dubious Beams" that dart from side to side (that is, his own unaided wits) than mortals here can trust for guidance to the "borrow'd beams of Moon and Stars." It may be useful, in this connection, to recall another simile from another English epic; I am thinking of that passage in Spenser's Fairie Queene where Britomart lifts up her visor and lets her face appear:

As when fair Cynthia, in darksome night,  
Is in a noyous cloud enveloped,  
Where she may find the substance thin and light,  
Breakes forth her silver beames, and her bright hed  
Discovers to the world discomfited;  
Of the poore traveller, that went astray,  
With thousand blessings she is heried;  
Such was the beautie and the shining ray,  
With which faire Britomart gave light unto the day.

(III i 43)

There are several points of correspondence ("silver beames" and "borrow'd beams," "shining ray" and "glimmering Ray"), but the most striking verbal parallel is with the light from above that "discovers" darkness for the sublunary traveler ("poore" in one case, "weary" in the other).<sup>23</sup> Unlike, however, the "fair Cynthia" of Spenser's poem, Dryden's moon provides at best a fitful illumination, and even that little comfort is strictly limited ("not to assure our doubtful way"). This image of dubiety, so much admired by readers of

Religio Laici, also casts its borrowed beams on Dryden's Aeneas.

The theme of doubt is emphasized by W.R. Johnson, who sees this as a "crucial moment in Virgil's poem--when war is certain [i.e., inevitable], the causes for that war beyond comprehension, the outcome of that war doubtful but tragic whoever triumphs."<sup>24</sup> The scrupulous care that Virgil took in rendering Aeneas' dilemma is evident from his placement of certain predicates: dividit, rapit, versat in the first part and pervolitat, erigitur, ferit in the second. Dryden's couplet art shows itself to similar advantage, in the symmetry of five vigorous verbs for Aeneas (as he "turns," "thinks," "rejects," "explores," and "gives") and five for the trembling beams of light (as they "strike," "divide," "cast," "play," and "flash").

This is also one of many places where Virgil repeats verbatim a line or two from an earlier passage. The following couplet,

atque animum nunc huc celerem, nunc dividit illuc,  
in partesque rapit varias, perque omnia versat,  
(20-21)

was used in Book Four (285-86) to describe Aeneas as he debated how best to go about breaking to Dido the bad news of his impending departure. Dryden also repeats, with slight variation, his own earlier couplet:

This way, and that he turns his anxious Mind,  
And all Expedients tries, and none can find:  
(IV 411-12)

The changed second line in Book Eight ("Thinks, and rejects



the Counsels he design'd") indicates, however, an important change in the character of Aeneas. One function of Virgil's repetition is to remind us how far the hero has advanced from his shaky predicament in Book Four, where Aeneas was his own worst enemy, to his present situation in Italy, where he finds himself facing mainly external foes, in the shape of Turnus and the other warring allies. In between, of course, has come the chastening experience of his descent into Hades, from which he has emerged a new man, with a stronger sense of himself and of his people's destiny. By substituting, in Book Eight, "Counsels" for "expedients" (by changing "tries" for the emphatic "Thinks"), Dryden offers a subtle contrast of his own. In Book Four, Aeneas had to disentangle himself, at all costs, from his affair with Dido, and thus the word "expedient" (which means literally "to set free") was quite appropriate. Even though Aeneas is still beset by doubts as to the future ("This way and that he turns his anxious Mind"), his manner now is that of a responsible statesman (one who takes "counsel" with himself) rather than a desperate adventurer.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>Oeuvres Mêlées de Saint Évremond, ed. Charles Giraud (Paris, 1865), II, 449. Dryden appears to have had this passage in mind when he mentions, in his Dedication, the "Objection" of a "French Critick, whom I will not name, because it is not much for his Reputation" (III, 1036). Dryden then proceeds to define this objection, and in words, moreover, which seem a pointed paraphrase of the French: when "endeavouring to raise our concerns to the highest pitch, [Virgil] turns short on the sudden into some

similitude, which diverts, they say, your attention from the main Subject, and mispends it on some trivial Image" (III, 1036). The parallel in the French for "some trivial Image" is "la vaine image." The best account of the relationship between Dryden and Evremond is John Aden's essay, "Dryden and Saint Evremond," Comparative Literature, VI (1954), 232-39.

<sup>2</sup>Douglas Knight, Pope and the Heroic Tradition (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1951), p. 86.

<sup>3</sup>Proudfoot, p. 194.

<sup>4</sup>TE, IX, 256.

<sup>5</sup>"Dryden and Satire: 'Mac Flecknoe, Absalom and Achitophel, The Medall,' and Juvenal," Writers and Their Background: John Dryden, ed. Earl Miner (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1972), p. 231.

<sup>6</sup>Christopher Ricks, Milton's Grand Style (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 146.

<sup>7</sup>P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Primus, ed. R.G. Austin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 147.

<sup>8</sup>Compare Fairclough ("here others lay the deep foundations of their theatre"), Mandelbaum ("others lay / the deep foundations for a theater"), and Fitzgerald ("there they laid / The deep foundation for a theatre").

<sup>9</sup>R.G. Austin, p. 149.

<sup>10</sup>On the Poetry of Pope, 2nd ed. (1938; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950), p. 74.

<sup>11</sup>The Works of Virgil, 2nd ed. (London, 1737).

<sup>12</sup>For Lauderdale's merits as a translator of Virgil, see Proudfoot, pp. 168-79.

<sup>13</sup>Modern Philology, XL (1943), 241-54. In a more recent study, "Dryden's Aeneis and the Delphin Virgil," Arvid Lønsnes argues that Dryden probably used the second edition of the Delphin Virgil (1682) rather than the first (1675). The two editions offer variant readings as well as different interpretations and notes. In some sixty-eight instances, Dryden seems to have followed the second edition. Since Lønsnes does not exclude the possibility that Dryden may have consulted both editions, and since the sum total of variants is fairly small, I have felt justified in referring to the first edition--the only one available

to me. Løsnæs' essay appears in The Hidden Sense, Norwegian Studies in English, IX (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), 113-57.

<sup>14</sup>Austin, p. 149.

<sup>15</sup>Dryden and the Art of Translation, p. 36.

<sup>16</sup>The phrase is E.M.W. Tillyard's; see The English Epic and Its Background (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1954), p. 175.

<sup>17</sup>Vladimir Nabakov, Lectures on Literature, ed. Fredson Bowers (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovitch, 1980), p. 26.

<sup>18</sup>The Aeneid of Virgil, ed. T.E. Page, 2 vols. (1900; rpt. London: Macmillan, 1970), II, 175.

<sup>19</sup>Translation: An Elizabethan Art (1931; rpt. New York: Octagon Press, 1965), p. 135.

<sup>20</sup>The Rambler, no. 94, 9 Feb. 1751, ed. W.J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1969), IV, 136.

<sup>21</sup>The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth, ed. Ernest De Selincourt, rev. C.L. Shaver, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 87.

<sup>22</sup>W.R. Johnson, Darkness Visible (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1976), p. 87.

<sup>23</sup>Jeanne K. Welcher has argued that "the famous image at the start of Religio Laici clearly echoes Virgil's Aeneid (VI 268-272)." See "The Opening Lines of Religio Laici and its Virgilian Associations," Studies in English Literature, VIII (1968), 391-96. It seems to me that Dryden's famous image also clearly echoes Spenser's lunar simile (EQ III i 43).

<sup>24</sup>Darkness Visible, p. 87.

CHAPTER THREE  
FIRE AND PLAGUE

In his preface to Annus Mirabilis (1666), Dryden speaks of the terrible "trials" his countrymen so recently endured, "War, a consuming Pestilence, and a more consuming Fire" (I, 42), and in stanza 291 of that poem, he links together "Plague and Fire," calling them the "two dire Commets which have scourg'd the Town" (1162). Despite this conjunction, only a few lines of Annus Mirabilis (1065-72) are devoted to a description of the plague itself, which, according to Walter Scott, "broke out in London with the most dreadful fury. In one year [1665] upwards of 90,000 inhabitants were cut off by this frightful visitation."<sup>1</sup> Some thirty years later, in his translation of the Third Georgic, Dryden had the opportunity to describe another pestilence, one, he calls in a headnote, the "fatal Murrain that formerly rag'd among the Alps" (II, 957).

It is the avenging fury, Tisiphone, who brings this "fatal Murrain" to its highest pitch of destruction. According to Virgil:

iamque catervatim dat stragem atque aggerat ipsis  
in stabulis turpi dilapsa cadavera tabo,  
donec humo tegere ac foveis abscondere discunt.  
nam neque erat coriis usus, nec viscera quisquam  
aut undis abolere potest aut vincere flamma. (560)  
ne tondere quidem morbo inlucieve peresa  
velleri nec telas possunt attingere putris:  
verum etiam invisos si quis temptaret amictus,

ardentes papulae atque immundus olentia sudor  
membra sequebatur, nec longo deinde moranti (565)  
tempore contactos artus sacer ignis edebat.  
(556-66)

And now in droves she deals out death, and in the  
very stalls piles up the bodies, rotting with  
putrid foulness, till men learn to cover them in  
earth and bury them in pits. For neither might  
the hides be used, nor could one cleanse the flesh  
by water or master it by fire. They could not  
even shear the fleeces, eaten up with sores and  
filth, nor touch the rotten web. Nay, if any man  
donned the loathsome garb, feverish blisters and  
foul sweat would run along his fetid limbs, and  
not long had he to wait ere the accursed fire was  
feeding on his stricken limbs.

(Fairclough)

Virgil has a didactic, husbandly, purpose--to show men the  
necessity of burying infected livestock (donec . . .  
discunt), and this lesson is driven home in the shocking  
image of a tainted fleece which, eaten up (peresa) with  
sores, in turn eats up (edebat) the person foolish enough to  
wear it.

"Far from being only a 'beauty Poet,'" Virgil "devotes  
equal care," says L.P. Wilkinson, "to describing what is  
repulsive--the effects of contagious disease, for  
instance."<sup>2</sup> Dryden may be more sensational than Virgil in  
describing what is repulsive; yet he, too, subordinates  
these gruesome effects to a larger design:

At length, she strikes an Universal Blow;  
To Death at once, whole Herds of Cattle go:  
Sheep, Oxen, Horses fall; and, heap'd on high,  
The diff'ring Species in Confusion lie. (830)  
Till, warn'd by frequent ills, the way they found,  
To lodge the loathsom Carrion underground.  
For, useless to the Currier were their Hides:  
Nor cou'd their tainted flesh, with Ocean Tides  
Be freed from filth; nor cou'd Vulcanian flame (835)  
The Stench abolish; or the Savour tame.

Nor safely cou'd they shear the fleecy store;  
(Made drunk with poysonous Juice, and stiff with gore:)  
Or touch the Web: But if the Vest they wear,  
Red Blisters rising on their Paps appear: (840)  
And flaming Carbuncles; and noisom Sweat,  
And clammy Dews, that loathsom Lice beget:  
Till the slow creeping Evil eats his way,  
Consumes the parching Limbs; and makes the Life his prey.  
(827-44)

Painting with a wider brush on a broader canvas, Dryden transforms (some would say transmogrifies) the Virgilian original into a Baroque composition, whose framework is a complex scheme of correspondence between general ("Herds") and specific ("Oxen"), abstract ("Universal") and particular ("diff'ring"), all of which collapses in "Confusion" (literally, a mixing together or turmoil). By naming the different "Species," Dryden also draws together the whole of Book Three (whose first part dealt with horses and cattle, the second with sheep and goats). Striving for greater unity and fullness, he still keeps an eye on the original. Thus, the spondaic substitution in line 828 ("whole Herds") recaptures the length and breadth of that polysyllabic adverb, cateruatim. So, too, his crowded measure, "Sheep, Oxen, Horses fall," approximates the jamming together, through harsh elision, of stragem atque aggerat. It is the substitution of a different foot, the pyrrhic (plus the absence of any internal pause), which accounts for the rapid movement of line 830: "The diff'ring Species in Confusion lie." Once again, there is an analogous effect in the Latin, dilapsa cadavera tabo, where

the coincidence of ictus and accent suggests the speedy dissolution of these carcasses.

To a myopic critic like Luke Milbourne, Dryden's "Faults" in "propriety of Expression" were "almost numberless."<sup>3</sup> Blind to the robust beauty of Dryden's rendering, Milbourne could not see how "Ocean Tides, "Vulcanian Flame," and "fleecy store"--those exaggerated epithets for water (undis), fire (flamma), and wool (vellera)--might also serve to amplify the "universal" scale of this catastrophe. Dryden enlarges, whenever he can, on the imagery of Virgil, and thus the burning pustules (ardentes papulae) become "Red Blisters rising on their Paps appear" (840). This symptom, like those "flaming Carbuncles" and "clammy Dews," was a common affliction in Dryden's day. A carbuncle, according to the OED, is "an inflammatory, circumscribed, malignant tumor, caused by an inflammation of the skin and cellular membrane." The OED also offers a 17th century definition (1631) of "dew": "a humour contained in the hollownesse of the members, and joyned to their Substance." To us, Dryden may appear to revel in his treatment of such repulsive details (Virgil, for instance, says nothing about "Carbuncles," "Dews," or "loathsom Lice"); it is well to remember, though, that we live in an age in which diseases like the plague have been largely eradicated.

This plague, says Virgil, acts like an "accursed fire" (sacer ignis). Certain events in the Aeneid--the burning

fleet in Book Five, the flaming tower in Book Nine, the raging madness in Book Seven--invert the two terms of this metaphorical equation. Instead of plague as fire, there we shall see fire described as plague. Whenever that inversion takes place, Dryden's verse "kindles" into life in a manner reminiscent of his Georgic passage, especially the concluding couplet, where personification goes much further than the Latin would seem to warrant:

Till the slow creeping Evil eats his way,  
Consumes the parching Limbs; and makes the Life his prey.

(Day Lewis has the literal yet lively rendering: "Not long then / Before the fiery curse ate up your tettered frame"). Dryden's image, his "slow creeping Evil," evokes the kind of death which Adam describes in Book Ten of Paradise Lost:

this days Death denounc't, if aught I see,  
Will prove no sudden, but a slow-pac't evil,  
A long days dying to augment our paine.

(962-64)

Like Milton ("no sudden, but a slow-pac'd evil") and unlike Virgil (nec longo deinde moranti / tempore), Dryden presents Death as a "slow creeping Evil." Thanks to the acoustical echoes (the same recurring vowel in "creeping," "Evil," and "eats"), consonance (the same final cluster [mz] in "Consumes" and "Limbs"), and alliteration (the same initial consonant in "parching" and "prey"), the victim himself seems verbally "afire." A rapacious appetite is one of Death's traditional attributes (in English poetry, at any rate). Thus Sin says of Death: "mee his Parent would full soon devour / For want of other prey" (PL II 805-06); and



thus Man is called "his last and sweetest prey" (PL X 609). The notion that man is the prey of death also finds expression in the final alexandrine of this Georgic passage, wherein the plague proceeds to its inexorable end "and makes the Life his prey."

ii

Toward the end of Book Five of the Aeneid, occurs a striking turn of events. No sooner has Aeneas finished celebrating the funeral games in honor of Anchises than Juno spoils the occasion. In his "Argument," Dryden gives this episode special attention: "While the Ceremonies were performing, Juno sends Iris to perswade the Trojan Women to burn the ships, who upon her instigation set fire to them" (III, 1171). As Aeneas and his train arrive on the scene, the women take to flight, whereupon, as Dryden tells us, they "shake the Goddess from their alter'd Mind" (898). Juno may be shaken from their hearts and minds (excussaque pectore Juno est), but not from the ships to which she now, in a kind of metamorphosis, transfers her fury:

Sed non idcirco flamma atque incendia viris  
indomitas posuere; udo sub robore vivit  
stuppa vomes tardum flammum, lentusque carinas  
est vapor, et toto descendit corpore pestis,  
nec vires heroum infusaque flumina prosunt.  
(680-84)

But not for that did the burning flames lay  
aside their unquelled fury; under the wet oak the  
tow is alive, slowly belching smoke; the  
smouldering heat devours the keels, a plague

sinking through the whole frame; nor can the  
 heroes' strength, nor the floods they pour, avail.  
 (Fairclough)

As befits the wrath of Juno, this fire will not relent  
 (non . . . viris . . . posuere): it turns into a living  
 creature (vivit) that spews (vomens), devours (est), and  
 like a plague (pestis) sinks into the body (corpore) of the  
 ship, itself personified.<sup>4</sup> The ironic repetition of viris  
 and vires merges men, matter, and energy into one animated  
 whole. Likening this conflagration to a pestilence, Virgil  
 alters the terms of his earlier comparison in the Third  
Georgic, where the tenor was disease (morbus) and the  
 vehicle fire (ignis). In each case, a malevolent force  
 overcomes its hapless, helpless victim, which no human being  
 can do anything to save: nec quisquam . . . potest  
 (Georgics III 559-560); nec vires. . . prosunt (Aeneid V  
 680).

Pestis becomes, in Dryden's version, a "silent Plague,"  
 and this image of contagion controls, colors, and informs  
 the entire verse paragraph:

Not so the raging Fires their Fury cease;  
 But lurking in the Seams, with seeming Peace, (890)  
 Work on their way, amid the smouldring Tow,  
 Sure in Destruction, but in Motion slow.  
 The silent Plague, thro' the green Timber eats,  
 And vomits out a tardy Flame, by fits.  
 Down to the Keels, and upward to the Sails, (895)  
 The Fire descends, or mounts; but still prevails:  
 Nor Buckets pour'd, nor strength of Human Hand,  
 Can the victorious Element withstand.  
 (889-98)<sup>5</sup>

On a larger scale, this passage carries out the kind of  
 personification Dryden was aiming at, thirty years earlier,

in his account of the Fire of London:

Then, in some close-pent room it crept along,  
And, smouldring as it went, in silence fed.  
(Annus Mirabilis 269-70)

And since deceit is Juno's outstanding quality, and her only weapon against Jove and Fate, Dryden has sought to make the Virgilian metaphor (pestis) betray the character of the goddess herself. Phonetic devices like internal rhyme ("lurking"/ "work," "Seams"/"seeming," "vomits"/"fits") lend acoustical support to the stealthy progress of her "raging Fires." The gratuitous line, "Sure in Destruction, but in Motion slow," is a good example of how rhetorical scheme (chiasmus) can become poetic trope. The pendulous rhythm and swishing sibilants suggest, simultaneously, the movement of this surreptitious blaze and the swaying of ships at anchor. In another line, "The silent Plague, thro' the green Timber eats," the iambic pattern competes with other stresses (a trochee in the third position and a spondee in the fourth) to dramatize the masticatory action of the plague.

As so often happens in his Aeneid, Dryden feels free not only to invent but to rearrange. Virgil's fire starts in the soggy oak (udo sub robore), goes to the caulking (stuppa), from there to the keels (carinas), and finally to the frame (corpore). Dryden's picture begins with the "Seams," then proceeds to the "smouldring Tow" and the "green Timber," reversing the steps of Virgil's presentation and giving the impression of a logical sequence of events,

which culminate, of course--beyond where Virgil ended--with the "Sails." Since Dryden is expanding the metaphorical range of this vignette, it is only natural that he stretch the literal subject to its limit:

Down to the Keels, and upward to the Sails,  
The Fire descends, or mounts; but still prevails:  
(895-96)

In the first verse, the grammatical elements are exactly parallel (an even pair of stresses giving equal balance to both parts); in the second verse (the iambs now resume their regular pulse), a conjunctive "and" gives way to a disjunctive "or"--wherever the fire goes, up or down, it is all the same. There is one more syntactic point which Dryden has yet to make, and he makes it with a metrical pause after "mounts"; by so placing, by so putting off, his closing rhyme, he can say with perfect justice that the fire "still prevails."

Virgil concludes by telling us that even the strength of heroes does not help:

nēc vīrēs hērōum īnfūsaque flūmina prōsunt.  
(684)

Elision and hiatus in the third foot (heroum infusaque) leave one vowel gaping upon the other on either side of the medial caesura. This unusual metrical license emphasizes, I think, the weakness and insufficiency of Virgil's heroes, whose power (vires) is no match for the greater power of Juno's unconquerable flames (viris indomitas). The prosodic struggle between ictus and accent makes the task of scanning

the line seem as difficult as the task of quenching the fire. "The fundamental paradox of [English] verse," according to Philip Larkin, is "the conflict of natural word usage with meter and rhyme."<sup>6</sup> We can see such a conflict at work in Dryden's own concluding couplet,

Nor Buckets pour'd, nor strength of Human Hand,  
Can the victorious Element withstand,  
(897-98)

where the poet counterpoints a daring departure from the metrical norm (line 898) against an equally expressive affirmation of that norm (line 897). It is in keeping with his realistic treatment of Virgil that Dryden also supplies the "Buckets" from which those streams of water (flumina) must have been "pour'd."<sup>7</sup>

In his brilliant handbook, Poetic Meter and Poetic Form, Paul Fussell reminds us that "the great moments of perception in English poetry . . . have constituted moments of metrical discovery: they all reveal an excitement with meter almost as an object of fundamental meaning in itself."<sup>8</sup> Readers who consider "victorious Element" nothing more than an elegant variation for fire are missing out on such a moment. This "Element" is "victorious" because it overrides the accentual/syllabic scheme on which the iambic verse is based. Our modern verse translators seem to have discovered few metrical insights of any kind:

So that all efforts to put out the fire with water  
were useless.  
(Day Lewis)

water cannot quench it,  
Nor any strength of men.  
(Humphries)

strong backs and water in floods were no avail.  
(Copley)

the strength  
of heroes, streams of water cannot help.  
(Mandelbaum)

Neither men's force, nor streams of water poured  
Prevailed on it.  
(Fitzgerald)

Against their various versions we may place these words by  
Dryden in his Dedication of the Aeneid:

I have long had by me the Materials of an  
English Prosodia, containing all the  
Mechanical Rules of Versification, wherein  
I have treated with some exactness of the  
Feet, the Quantities, and the Pauses.  
(III, 1047)

Although the word "Mechanical" is bound to put off many  
people, Dryden's practice, on this occasion, is anything but  
mechanical.

iii

In one shape or another, the outbreak of fire is a  
persistent threat and an insistent theme throughout Virgil's  
poem, and the burning of Troy in Book Two serves as the  
prototype for every succeeding fire. Book Nine features a  
conflagration of much greater scope than that described in  
Book Five; here, once again, the poet endows his nominal  
subject--the destruction by Turnus of the Trojan tower--with  
the personality of his protagonist:

Turris erat vasto suspectu et pontibus altis, (530)  
opportuna loco, summis quam viribus omnes

expugnare Itali summaque evertere opum vi  
certabant, Troes contra defendere saxi  
perque cavas densi tela intorquere fenestras.  
princeps ardentem coniecit lampada Turnus (535)  
et flammam adfixit lateri, quae plurima vento  
corripuit tabulas et postibus haesit adesis.  
turbati trepdare intus frustra malorum  
velle fugam. dum se glomerant retroque residunt  
in partem, quae peste caret, tum pondere turris (540)  
procubuit subito et caelum tonat omne fragore.  
semineces ad terram, inmani mole secuta,  
confixique suis telis et pectora duro  
transfossi ligno veniunt.  
(530-544)

A tower loomed high above, with lofty gangways,  
posted on vantage ground, which all the Italians  
strove with utmost strength to storm, and with  
utmost force of skill to overthrow: the Trojans  
in turn made defence with stones, and hurled  
showers of darts through the open loopholes.  
First Turnus flung a blazing torch and made fast  
its fire in the side; this, fanned by the wind,  
seized the planks and lodged in the gateways it  
consumed. Within, troubled and terrified, men  
vainly seek escape from disaster. While they  
huddle close and fall back to the side free from  
ruin, lo! under the sudden weight the tower fell,  
and all the sky thunders with the crash. Half  
dead they come to the ground, the monstrous mass  
behind them, pierced by their own shafts, and  
their breasts impaled by the cruel splinters.  
(Fairclough)

Four descriptive panels appear to make up this  
vignette: section one (530-34) presents the lofty tower,  
besieged from without by the Italians, defended from within  
by the Trojans; section two (535-37) shows Turnus setting  
fire to the wooden structure; section three (538-40)  
describes the victims trapped inside (intus) who scramble  
for safety (velle fugam) and huddle together (se glomerant)  
in the one spot (partem) free from the encroaching contagion  
(quae peste caret); and then with a smooth transition in  
line 540 (tum pondere turris), the fourth and final section  
moves to a topsy-turvy scene of chaos and confusion where

dead and dying men (semineces) tumble to the ground, pierced (confixi) by their own weapons and impaled (transfossi) on the splinters of the very tower that served as their defense. Virgil's descriptive poetry is as suggestive as it is graphic. Note, for instance, how the last three images (semineces, confixi, transfossi) are fixed firmly in the mind's eye by virtue of their position at the beginning of the last three lines (542-44).

For further exemplification of Virgil's skill, let us look at the second panel of this vignette:

princeps ardentem coniecit lampada Turnus  
et flammam advixit lateri, quae plurima vento  
corripuit tabulas et postibus haesit adesis.  
(535-37)

Line 535 offers frame after frame, as it were, of syntactic snapshots: two modifiers, princeps (it is unclear, at first, who or what is "chief") and ardentem (something "ablaze"), the action verb coniecit, and two nouns--the object lampada and the actor-subject Turnus (who hurls the firebrand). The apposition of princeps and ardentem suggests, I think, that Turnus transfers something of his own fiery energy into the blazing brand. Almost immediately and without a break (et flammam), the brand becomes a flame which Turnus fastens (adfixit) to the side (lateri) of the building. In line 536, the process of contagion begins in earnest, as the relative pronoun quae catches the flame that now in turn seizes (corripuit) and clings to (haesit) the boards and planks on which it feeds (adesis). In Book Five, we may recall, Virgil used the same "eating" image in



his description of the fire which devoured (est) the Trojan ships; recall, too, the fiery curse (sacer ignis) which consumed (edebat) the disease-ridden victim in the Third Georgic. In Book Nine, Virgil also employs the same conspicuous metaphor for fire (peste) as he did in Book Five; this plague is emblematic of Turnus in much the same way as that previous pestis was of Juno.

Most translators, including Fairclough, consider the image (quae peste caret) so insignificant, they omit it altogether:

Alarm and confusion seized the defenders within;  
Escape their doom, but in vain. Jammed together,  
To the side of the tower that was free from fire.  
(Day Lewis)

Within, and found no way to flee, and shifted  
Toward the undamaged portion.  
(Humphries)

The men inside panicked, and tried in vain  
to escape danger. They all rushed to the side  
away from the fire.  
(Copley)

Inside  
men tremble, troubled, try in vain to find  
escape from this disaster. While they huddle,  
retreating where the fire has not yet taken  
hold.  
(Mandelbaum)

The garrison, in panic at this horror,  
Having no exit, herded to that side  
Still free of deadly fire.  
(Fitzgerald)

Against their versions we may place, yet once again, these words by Dryden in his Dedication:

The Language of an Epick Poem is almost wholly  
figurative: Yet they [certain translators] are

so fearful of a Metaphor, that no Example of  
Virgil can encourage them to be bold with safety.  
(III, 1055-56)

Not only is Dryden not fearful of metaphor; his  
passage, like Virgil's, is almost wholly figurative:

There stood a Tow'r, amazing to the sight,  
Built up of Beams; and of stupendous height; (705)  
Art, and the nature of the Place conspir'd,  
To furnish all the Strength, that War requir'd.  
To level this, the bold Italians join;  
The wary Trojans obviate their design:  
With weighty Stones o'rewhelm their Troops below, (710)  
Shoot thro' the Loopholes, and sharp Jav'lins throw.  
Turnus, the Chief, toss'd from his thund'ring Hand,  
Against the wooden Walls, a flaming Brand:  
It stuck, the fiery Plague: The Winds were high;  
The Planks were season'd, and the Timber dry. (715)  
Contagion caught the Posts: It spread along,  
Scorch'd, and to distance drove the scatter'd Throng.  
The Trojans fled; the Fire pursu'd amain,  
Still gath'ring fast upon the trembling Train;  
Till crowding to the Corners of the Wall, (720)  
Down the Defence, and the Defenders fall.  
The mighty flaw makes Heav'n itself resound,  
The dead, and dying Trojans strew the Ground.  
The Tow'r that follow'd on the fallen Crew,  
Whelm'd o're their Heads, and bury'd whom it slew: (725)  
Some stuck upon the Darts themselves had sent;  
All, the same equal Ruin underwent. (704-727)

In the calculated symmetry, or architectonics, of this long  
verse paragraph, Dryden seems to design an almost "provi-  
dential" or "poetical Justice." Soldiers, for instance, who  
at the beginning "o'rewhelm" (710) their enemies find  
themselves "whelm'd o're" (725) at the end. The repetition  
and rearrangement of the same compound verb (tmesis is the  
rhetorical term for cutting a word in two) gives a new  
figurative dimension to this reversal of fortune.

To whom, one wonders at the outset, is the situation of  
the tower (opportuna loco) suitable or advantageous, the  
besiegers or the besieged? According to Dryden:

Art, and the nature of the Place conspir'd,  
To furnish all the Strength, that War requir'd.  
(706-07)

A conspiracy of Art and Nature would seem to suggest a kind of concordia discors, or harmonious union of opposites. It is just this sort of union that Pope has in mind when he says of Homer's epic poem: "Art and Nature conspire to raise it" (TE, X, 450). Nowadays we seldom use the word "conspire" (which derives from the Latin conspirare, "to breathe together") in its neutral sense--to act or work together toward a common goal. "Art and Nature conspire" (that is, combine) "to raise" the literary edifice of Homer, and they conspire "to furnish all the Strength" necessary for the fortification here, but to no avail: "To level this, the bold Italians join" (708).

There is, I think, a certain mythic resonance which also comes into play and which enters here by way of Milton. Dryden's opening line ("there stood a Tow'r) suggests, to my mind, the introduction to a long verse paragraph in Paradise Lost, where Milton describes the building of Pandemonium:

There stood a Hill not farr, whose griesly top  
Belch'd fire and rowling smoak.

(I 670-71)

Not only is Dryden's tower ("amazing to the sight" and "of stupendous height") more grandiose than Virgil's (vasto suspectu), it also seems invested with a kind of grandiosity we may associate with the works of Satan and, in particular, with Satan's admiration "at the sight / Of that stupendous Bridge" which traverses Chaos in Book Ten of Paradise Lost

(350-51). Later on, when Dryden speaks of "The Tow'r that follow'd on the fallen crew" (immane mole secuta), he models his final phrase on such familiar Miltonic locutions as "horrid crew" (I 51), "industrious crew" (I 751), "hapless crew" (V 879), "Godless crew" (VI 49), and "cursed crew" (VI 806). Another, more definite, recollection of Milton occurs in the concluding line ("All, the same equal Ruin underwent"), which incorporates a pregnant phrase from Satan's first speech to Beelzebub:

Joind with me once, now misery hath joind  
In equal ruin.

(I 90-91)

While to "undergo" usually means "to suffer" or "endure," the impact of Dryden's "underwent" is shockingly literal. The same is true for "Ruin," which harks back to the Latin verb ruere, meaning "to fall." Dryden's somber pun is as fitting for Virgil's unfortunate Trojans as it is for Milton's fallen angels. According to William Frost, one of Dryden's strengths as a translator comes "from his aptness in finding adequate imagery and language to correspond to the many Virgilian versions of chaos."<sup>9</sup> By stressing the "equal Ruin" of all these men, Dryden gives to this particular version of chaos a much wider scope than we find in the original. We are given the impression (such is the expansive reach of Dryden's metaphoric "Ruin") that a world itself is on the verge of being annihilated.

This impression is reinforced when Dryden writes, "The mighty Flaw makes Heav'n itself resound." These words, like

those of Virgil (et caelum tonat omne fragore), have something that is "connatural" to the sense (note the long back vowels in "Flaw" and "resound"; note, too, the medial spondee, "makes Heav'n itself," which creates a minor clamor of its own). Here Dryden revives a certain phrase ("the mighty Flaw") which sounded in such earlier works as Aureng-Zebe ("I heard the mighty flaw, / When first it broke")<sup>10</sup> and All for Love:

Was it for me to prop  
The ruins of a falling majesty?  
To place myself beneath the mighty flaw,  
Thus to be crushed and pounded into atoms,  
By its o'erwhelming weight?

(V 21-25)<sup>11</sup>

The same phrase reappears in that stately but static poem, Threnodia Augustalis (I, 443):

As if great Atlas from his Height  
Shou'd sink beneath his heavenly Weight,  
And with a mighty Flaw, the flaming Wall  
(As once it shall)  
Shou'd gape immense and rushing down, o'rewhelm this  
nether Ball.

(29-33)

Nowadays, the common meaning for "flaw" is "crack" or "rift"; in Dryden's day, it could also mean a "sudden uproar or tumult" (OED). Both these meanings reverberate in the "mighty Flaw" of Dryden's Aeneid (722). The credit, however, for this resounding verse must go, not to Dryden, but to the Earl of Lauderdale, whose own translation of Virgil contains the very same line:

The mighty flaw makes Heav'n itself resound.  
(IX 676)

It is one of "some two hundred lines" which, Van Doren tells

us, Dryden "appropriated without any alteration."<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, it is not a case of simple plagiarism. We know from Proudfoot's study that Lauderdale's "versification is the work of a man who read and imitated Dryden."<sup>13</sup> Threnodia Augustalis, All for Love, Aureng-Zebe--any one of these works would have been familiar to Lauderdale. Should Dryden be blamed for re-appropriating what was largely his own (the "mighty Flaw") to begin with? It is fitting, moreover, that Dryden should make us think, however fleetingly, of the falling majesty of figures such as Cleopatra and Charles II (our "great Atlas") at the same time we are reading about heroic characters and heroic events from a much more distant age.

The incendiary feat of Turnus is a powerful piece of writing--as powerful, I think, as anything Dryden produces in his "original" poetry:

Turnus, the chief, toss'd from his thund'ring Hand,  
Against the wooden Walls, a flaming Brand:  
It stuck, the fiery Plague: The Winds were high,  
The Planks were season'd, and the Timber dry.  
Contagion caught the posts: It spread along,  
Scorch'd, and to distance drove the scatter'd Throng.  
(712-17)

Whatever may have been Dryden's "Materials for an English Prosodia" (III, 1047), he could hardly have chosen better verses than these to illustrate his own "Rules." One such rule, I take it, would have had to do with metrical variation--the art of substituting an alternate foot like a trochee or spondee in place of the foot one normally expects to find (the customary iamb). Observe, for example, how the

initial and medial trochees in line 712 ("Turnus, the chief, /  
toss'd") cooperate to convey the sense of sheer physical effort involved in flinging the "flaming Brand" (it is with this "Brand," moreover, that the couplet syntax comes to completion). Here Dryden is imitating the spondaic struggle of the Latin (prīnceps ardētēm cōniēcit lampada Turnus) with its competing stresses of ictus and accent. No less important than his expressive syntax is his expressive punctuation. Those visual sign-posts, the comma and the colon, delineate such elements as "the Chief" and "the fiery Plague" ("It stuck," so Dryden tells us, and the image itself seems to stick in the mind's eye).

Like the "silent Plague" in Book Five, this "fiery Plague" takes on a metaphoric life of its own, and Dryden makes everything ready for its reception: the "wooden Walls," the "high" winds, the "season'd" planks, the "dry" timber. Art and Nature, which once "conspir'd" to raise this tower, now conspire to aid in its destruction. Dryden breathes new life into his personification when he writes, "Contagion caught the posts" (the alliteration itself is catching). The colon after "posts" serves a double purpose--to interrupt the progress of the fire and to carry the "Contagion" forward: "It spread along, / Scorch'd, and to distance drove the scatter'd Throng." The inverted stress at the beginning of this verse falls on the active verb "Scorch'd"; it is one of Dryden's favorite metrical substitutions, a famous example of which occurs in the

following line from Absalom and Achitophel, where David

/                      wide as his Command,  
Scatter'd his Maker's Image through the Land.  
(9-10)

The shock which attends the verb "Scatter'd" (Dryden's vivid metaphor for the promiscuous casting of David's seed) is not unlike the shock we feel when the "fiery Plague" changes from a "spreading" to a "scorching" contagion.

Dryden goes beyond Virgil in turning this fire into an active, even sentient, force with a kind of will, moreover, and purpose of its own. There is no warrant in the Latin for the notion that the fire "drove," as Dryden tells us, "the scatter'd Throng"; there is some warrant in Milton, however, for this heightened animation of the Latin original. The reader may recall, perhaps, how Christ secures the overthrow and rout of Satan:

                                 as a Herd  
Of Goats or timerous Flock together throngd  
Drove them before him Thunder-strook, persu'd  
With terrors and with furies to the bounds  
And Crystal wall of Heav'n.

(PL VI 856-860)

In a manner reminiscent (to me, at least) of Milton, Dryden's expressive verbs, "drove" and "pursu'd," secure the rout of the Trojans and their containing "Wall":

The Trojans fled; the Fire pursu'd amain,  
Still gath'ring fast upon the trembling Train;  
Till crowding to the Corners of the Wall,  
Down the Defence, and the Defenders fall.  
(718-21)

There is a sense of inevitability about this disaster, a feeling which is given rhythmical support by the initial spondees ("Still gath'ring" and "Till crowding") and further



reinforcement by the internal rhyme of "Still" and "Till."  
Another internal rhyme--that of "crowding" and "Down"--makes  
the collapse of tower and those within it seem inescapable.  
Dryden's "trembling Train" can no more avoid their fate than  
can Milton's "timerous Flock," soon to be driven "Down from  
the verge of Heav'n" (PL IV 865).<sup>14</sup>

In his Discourse concerning Satire, Dryden cites  
examples from Ovid and Virgil to illustrate what he calls  
the "extraordinary turn"--a turn "both on Thoughts and  
Words" (II, 667). Line 721 ("Down the Defence, and the  
Defenders fall") seems to me a splendid example of one such  
turn, where the thought (the idea of "equal Ruin") turns  
with the repetition of two cognate words ("Defence" and  
"Defenders"). There is something else about this line--its  
dying fall--which calls for comment, and perhaps the best  
commentary is Pope's eloquent couplet:

Inexorable Death shall level all,  
And Trees, and Stones, and Farms, and Farmer fall.  
(Epistle II ii 262-63)

These lines, with their similar cadence and their similar  
turn ("Farms, and Farmer fall"), show how Dryden's couplet  
eloquence lived on in Pope, who borrowed, moreover, the  
phrase "Inexorable Death" from another passage in Dryden's  
Aeneid: "Acca, 'tis past! He swims before my sight, /  
Inexorable Death" (XI 1197-98).

The image of Death as the ultimate leveler is one which  
Dryden develops, in various ways, throughout this verse  
paragraph. The idea is implicit in the opening phrase

("There stood a Tow'r"), explicitly stated in the interpolated line ("To level this, the bold Italians join"), and graphically presented when "Dead, and dying Trojans strew the Ground." All these emphatic verbs ("stood," "level," "strew,"), as well as others ("whelm'd o're," "bury'd," "underwent"), have little, if any, basis in the text of Virgil which Dryden is translating. They have some basis, however, in the larger design of Virgil's poem. Recall, if you will, that other scene of chaos and confusion which appears in Book Two:

ea lapsa repente ruina  
cum sonitu trahit et Danaum super agmina late  
incidit.

(465-67)

With sudden fall it [the Trojan tower] trails  
a thunderous ruin, and over the Danaan ranks  
crashes far and wide.

(Fairclough)

As a last desperate measure against the invading Greeks, the Trojans tore apart their own citadel, fragments of which they hurled upon their enemies below. It is part, I think, of the poetical justice of Virgil's poem that the Trojans in Book Nine should suffer a fate like that of the Greeks in Book Two. It is one of Dryden's strengths as an interpreter of Virgil that he should see (vividly and clearly) the connection between that "ruin'd Wall" in Book Two--

Down goes the top at once; the Greeks beneath  
Are piecemeal torn, or pounded into Death.  
Yet more succeed, and more to death are sent--

(635-37)

and the later "equal Ruin" in Book Nine.

To this cluster of plagues, silent and fiery, that Dryden has invented must be added yet another--the "darling Plague" of Book Seven which, at the instigation of Alecto, drives Amata mad. Alecto, like Tisiphone in the Third Georgic, is one of the Furies, and even her sisters, according to Virgil, hate the sight of her.<sup>15</sup> Like Tisiphone, she inflames her victim with a pestilential frenzy; the difference in the Aeneid, however, is that Virgil is depicting a mental rather than a physical affliction. In language, moreover, that is almost wholly figurative, he shows us how Alecto insinuates herself into the very depths of Amata's being:

huic dea caeruleis unum de crinibus anguem  
conicit, inque sinum praecordia ad intima subdit,  
quo furibunda domum monstro permisceat omnem.  
ille inter vestes et levia pectora lapsus  
volvitur attactu nullo, fallitque furem, (350)  
vipeream inspirans animam; fit tortile collo  
aurum ingens coluber, fit longae taenia vittae,  
innectitque comas, et membris lubricus errat.  
ac dum prima lues udo sublapsa veneno  
pertemptat sensus atque ossibus implicat ignem, (355)  
necdum animus toto percepit pectore flammam,  
mollius, et solito matrum de more, locuta est,  
multa super nata lacrimans Phrygiisque hymenaeis.  
(346-58)

On her the goddess flings a snake from her dusky tresses, and thrusts it into her bosom, into her inmost heart, that maddened by the pest she may embroil all the house. Gliding between her raiment and smooth breasts, it winds its way unfelt, and unseen by the frenzied woman, breathes into her its viperous breath. The huge snake becomes the collar of twisted gold about her neck, becomes the festoon of the long fillet, entwines itself into her hair, and slides smoothly over her

limbs. And while the first taint, stealing on in fluent poison, thrills her senses and wraps her bones with fire, nor yet her soul has caught the flame throughout her breast, softly, as mothers are wont, she spoke, shedding many a tear over her daughter's and the Phrygian's wedlock.

(Fairclough)

Here the two motifs of fire and disease are subordinated to the all-pervasive imagery of the serpent, which starts out as a snaky lock in Alecto's hair (unum de crinibus anquem), then changes to a golden necklace (tortile collo aurum) and trailing ribbon (longae taenia vittae), and becomes at last a kind of slithering poison (lues sublapsa) which enfolds with flame (inplicat ignem) the bones of Amata, who remains insensible (attactu nullo) and unaware (necdum . . . percepit) of the transformation taking place within (toto pectore) and without (levia pectora lapsus).

Virgil's figurative language is rich and elaborate (far more rich and subtle than this summary account would indicate), and so is Dryden's. All in all, however, Dryden is more successful at depicting the outward and visible movement of Alecto than he is at suggesting her inward and invisible course:

From her black bloody Locks the Fury shakes (485)  
Her darling Plague, the Fav'rite of her Snakes:  
With her full Force she threw the pois'nous Dart,  
And fix'd it deep within Amata's Heart.  
That thus envenom'd she might kindle Rage,  
And sacrifice to Strife her House and Husbands Age. (490)  
Unseen, unfelt, the fiery Serpent skims  
Betwixt her Linnen, and her naked Limbs.  
His baleful Breath inspiring, as he glides,  
Now like a Chain around her Neck he rides;  
Now like a Fillet to her Head repairs, (495)  
And with his circling Volume folds her Hairs.

At first the silent Venom slid with ease,  
And seiz'd her cooler Senses by degrees;  
Then e're th' infected Mass was fir'd too far,  
In Plaintive Accents she began the War. (500)  
(485-500)<sup>16</sup>

Alecto, in the Latin, flings (conicit) the serpent from her hair with the same verb that Turnus does when he tosses (coniecit) his flaming brand. She brandishes her snake, in other words, like a weapon of war:

huic dea caeruleis unum de crinibus anguem  
conicit, inque sinum praecordia ad intima subdit.  
(346-47)

The interlacing syntax of the Latin, where unum lies between caeruleis and crinibus, draws attention to those tangled tresses and the care with which Alecto plucks from them a single lock. Ruaeus, who glosses lues (354) as pestis, may have reinforced Dryden's decision to give this sinister creature the sinister name of "plague":<sup>17</sup>

From her black bloody Locks the Fury shakes  
Her darling Plague, the Fav'rite of her Snakes:  
With her full force she threw the pois'nous Dart,  
And fix'd it deep within Amata's Heart.  
(485-88)

The spondaic substitution in line 485 ("black bloody") makes the reader dwell upon a gory image, altogether gorier than caeruleis. The same spondaic substitution in line 487 ("full force") serves a different purpose: the phrase gathers unto itself all of Alecto's accumulated fury, only to release it in the regular cadences that follow. Alliteration, furthermore, makes each of these measures a more distinct and compact unit. The epithets "darling" and

"fav'rite" reveal a grim, demonic humor of the sort we often find in Milton; thus Sin styles herself, when speaking to Satan, "thy daughter and thy darling" (PL II 871). Dryden's Alecto seems, in some ways, to be a composite portrait of Sin and Death. The reader may recall how Milton describes Satan's first encounter with Death:

                    black it stood as Night,  
Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,  
And shook a dreadful Dart.

(PL II 670-72)

Dryden's Alecto also "shakes" and throws "a pois'nous Dart"; this "Dart" is linked by assonance and alliteration to the epithet "darling," and constitutes (together with "deep") a piercing verbal weapon to be directed at "Amata's Heart."

Other translators, it seems to me, do little more than offer us the words of Virgil:

On her the fiend now casts a serpent, one of her  
  snake-blue  
Tresses, and thrusts it into her bosom, deep into  
  her heart,  
So that the queen may discharge through the house-  
  hold its manic infection.  
(Day Lewis)

From her own dark hair, Alecto pulled one serpent  
Meant for the queen, her intimate heart, her bosom,  
Corruption, evil, frenzy for the household.  
(Humphries)

From hell-blue hair the goddess hurled one snake  
at the queen's breasts, to lie close to her heart,  
and witch her to fury--her and all her house.  
(Copley)

Then from her blue-grey hair the goddess cast  
a snake deep into Amata's secret breast,  
that, maddened by the monster, she might set  
at odds all of her household.  
(Mandelbaum)

Now the goddess  
Plucked one of the snakes, her gloomy tresses,  
And tossed it at the woman, sent it down  
Her bosom to her midriff and her heart,  
So that by this black reptile driven wild  
She might disrupt her whole house.

(Fitzgerald)

"Allecto," according to Brooks Otis, "is the symbol of furor raised to a social dimension."<sup>18</sup> Virgil gives vivid expression to this social dimension in the following verse,

quo furibunda domum monstro permisceat omnem,  
(348)

where the repetition of certain sounds (chiefly "m" and "o") makes the madness appear to spread throughout the line and throughout the royal house. In the hypermetric couplet,

That thus envenom'd she might kindle Rage,  
And sacrifice to Strife her House and Husbands Age,  
(489-90)

(where "sacrifice" assonates with "Strife," and where "House" both alliterates and consonates with "Husbands"), Dryden carries the same idea even further. The original meaning of "husband" is "master of the house" (from the Old English "hūsbonða"), and nothing, not even venerable Latinus (his "Age" is a new emphasis on Dryden's part) can resist Alecto and her proxy Amata. With the figurative words "envenom'd" and "kindle," Dryden, moreover, introduces his own variation on the twin motifs of fire and disease.

These motifs converge in the "fiery Serpent" of the following couplet:

Unseen, unfelt, the fiery Serpent skims  
Betwixt her Linnen, and her naked Limbs.  
(491-92)

Throughout his poem, Dryden uses enjambments of varying

length to emphasize the syntactic and semantic importance of certain words and phrases (the "darling Plague," for instance, in line 486). Here enjambment serves the purpose of making the serpent "skim," as it were, from one verse to the next; the gliding consonants "l" and "n" (and the short vowel "i") help convey the sensuous movement of the snake. If we turn to Virgil (349-50),

ille inter vestest et levis pectora lapsus  
volvitur attactu nullo,

we can see how closely Dryden has imitated the sliding syntax of the Latin (lapsus, at the end of one verse, is succeeded by volvitur at the beginning of the next), as well as the rippling aural pattern of vowels ("i" and "e") and consonants ("l" and "v"). The emphatic doublet, "unseen, unfelt," also calls for comment. In an original poem, Absalom and Achitophel, Dryden used the term "unfelt" to evoke the serpent-like fashion in which Absalom insinuates himself into the hearts of the populace (692-93):

Thus, form'd by Nature, furnish'd out with Arts,  
He glides unfelt into their secret hearts.

In his Aeneid, Dryden supplies the additional term "unseen," the insertion of which prepares us to suspend our disbelief, as we behold the magical metamorphosis now under way.

Dryden claims to have studied, long before he undertook his verse translation, the "judicious management" of Virgil's "Figures" (III, 1051). Here is how Virgil manages the rhetorical figure anaphora (repetition of a word or words at the beginning of successive phrases):



vipeream inspirans animam, fit tortile collo  
aurum ingens coluber, fit longae tortile vittae,  
innectitque comas, et membris lubricus errat.  
(351-53)

As Dryden puts it:

His baleful Breath inspiring, as he glides,  
Now like a Chain around her Neck he rides;  
Now like a Fillet to her Head repairs,  
And with his circling Volume folds her Hairs.  
(493-96)

By substituting a trochee ("Now like") in the initial position of lines 494 and 495, he reinforces our sense that Amata and Alecto have now become virtually indistinguishable, one from the other. Set against the regular meter of lines 493 and 496, the two similes stand out in bold relief--all of which is to the good, since it underscores the startling transformation that is taking place. No one will deny, of course, that the process Virgil describes is richer, subtler, and, finally, more moving. One has only to compare his delicate imagery (reduced by Dryden to "Chain" and "Fillet"), couched in the form of metaphors rather than similitudes, to see the difference in poetic texture. Lest, however, we censure too sharply Dryden's attenuation of Virgil's imagery, consider his elaboration of innectitque comas: "And with his circling Volume folds her Hairs." Readers may recall that in the Ninth Book of Paradise Lost Milton piles up a number of descriptive terms, among them "fold" and "circling," in his picture of the serpent Satan:

Fould above fould a surging Maze, his Head  
Crested aloft, and Carbuncle his Eyes;

With burnisht Neck of verdent Gold, erect  
Amidst his circling Spires, that in the grass  
Floted redundant.

(499-503)

To some extent, the practice of Milton sanctions and explains the practice of Dryden. Reviving the Latin (note the pun on spira, meaning "coil," and the pun on volumen, meaning "a roll of sheets") enables each poet to create a living metaphor.

Having presented the outward and visible movement of Alecto, Dryden tries to suggest her inward and invisible course:

At first the silent Venom slid with ease,  
And seiz'd her cooler Senses by degrees.

(497-98)

Though this fluent couplet, with its seven sibilants, does convey her stealthy progress, it does so at the cost of blurring Virgil's serpentine imagery (ossibus implicat ignem). This is not the only imagery which Dryden blurs (animus toto percepet pectore flammam):

Then, e're th' infected Mass was fir'd too far,  
In Plaintive Accents she began the War:  
And thus bespoke her Husband.

(499-501)

Maynard Mack speaks in his Introduction to Pope's Iliad of "the generalizing habit" of Pope's "imagination" (TE, VII, lvi). The generalizing habit of Dryden's imagination can be seen in these concluding lines, where "infected Mass" rolls into one verbal ball this venomous and fiery contagion. It may be useful to recall that Milton ascribes to Sin

an equally pervasive and pervading power of infection:

I in man residing through the Race,  
His thoughts, his looks, words, actions all infect.  
(PL X 608-09)

We saw in Chapter Two that Virgil's Amata still retained some traces of humanity (tum vero infelix), even after Alecto had taken full possession of her heart and mind. In this passage, too, Virgil grants Amata a few sympathetic touches: her maternal manner (solito matrum de more) and her maternal concern for the welfare of her daughter (super nata lacrimans). Dryden allows Amata but one token of tenderness--her "Plaintive Accents." And he qualifies this pathos by telling us that in these "Accents" she thus "began the War." According to Proudfoot, Dryden's "poetic periphrases are very numerous. Those involving 'war' are particularly noticeable for their frequency, their affectation, their exaggeration."<sup>19</sup> On this occasion, it seems to me, Dryden's periphrasis ("began the War") is quite appropriate. This "war" refers to the ensuing debate with King Latinus. It is a "war" of words and a futile war at that, since Latinus remains unmoved by Amata's entreaties on behalf of Turnus and Lavinia. In another and more general sense, Amata begins that greater "war" between the Latins and the Trojans, one of whose ultimate casualties is, of course, the queen herself. Dryden's periphrasis is rich in meaning, not only for its immediate context, but for the wider context of the poem itself.

Notes

<sup>1</sup>The Works of John Dryden, ed. Sir Walter Scott, rev. George Saintsbury (Edinburgh, 1884), IX, 181-82.

<sup>2</sup>The Georgics of Virgil, a Critical Survey, p. 194.

<sup>3</sup>Here is how Milbourne sums up his critique of Dryden's Third Georgic: "Thus have I gone thro this III. Book, noting a few of almost numberless Faults in English, in Sense, in his Authors meaning, and in propriety of Expression, and can't but wonder that any Man, who could not but be Conscious of his unfitness for it, should go to amaze the learned World with such an undertaking." Notes on Dryden's Virgil, in a Letter to a Friend, with an Essay on the Same Poet (London, 1698), p. 192.

<sup>4</sup>My analysis of this passage is similar in some respects to Michael J. Putnam's. See The Poetry of the Aeneid (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1966), p. 90: "The ships now take on human characteristics for a moment, as the poet's metaphors lend a rather special touch to the imagery of fire."

<sup>5</sup>Dryden's opening couplet (889-90) is heavily indebted to Lauderdale:

Not so devouring Flames their Fury cease,  
Now 'twixt the Seams they lurk, and then increase.  
(V 839-40)

<sup>6</sup>Larkin, Required Writing: Miscellaneous Pieces, 1955-1982 (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1982), p. 253.

<sup>7</sup>Dryden may have borrowed the idea of "Buckets" from Lauderdale: "Nor Men, nor Seas in Buckets dash'd avail" (V 722).

<sup>8</sup>Poetic Meter and Poetic Form (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 3. I have learned a good deal from Fussell about neo-classic prosody, especially from his remarks on Pope's versification.

<sup>9</sup>Frost, Dryden and the Art of Translation, p. 89.

<sup>10</sup>Aureng-Zebe, ed. Frederick M. Link, Regents Restoration Drama Series (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1971), V 395-96.

<sup>11</sup>All for Love, ed. David M. Vieth, Regents Restoration Drama Series (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1972), V 23-27.

<sup>12</sup>Van Doren, John Dryden: A Study of His Poetry, p. 101.

<sup>13</sup>Proudfoot, p. 170.

<sup>14</sup>The fire overtakes them ("the Trojans fled; the fire pursu'd amain") as Death overtakes, in another Miltonic context, his mother Sin: "I fled, but he persu'd" (PL II 790).

<sup>15</sup>See Aeneid IX 327-28: odere sorores / Tartareae Monstrum.

<sup>16</sup>A few phrases ("Circling Volume," "like a Chain," "by degrees") in this passage show the influence of Lauderdale:

Between her Robes and Skin his spiral Volumes roll,  
O'er all her Limbs surround like Chains of Gold.  
(VII 354-55)

The humid Poison gently first invades  
Her sense, till by degrees the Venom spreads.  
(VII 357-58)

<sup>17</sup>Ruaeus, p. 340.

<sup>18</sup>Brooks Otis, Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p. 324.

<sup>19</sup>Proudfoot, p. 228.

CHAPTER FOUR  
NISUS AND EURYALUS

At the end of his essay on Dryden's Aeneid, Robert Fitzgerald declares that "no one else, with no matter how much leisure, has yet achieved a version so variously interesting and as true to the best style of a later age as his was to his own."<sup>1</sup> We have, in the previous chapters, used several touchstones to confirm Fitzgerald's finding. The next two chapters deal with larger matters: the story of Nisus and Euryalus from Book Nine and that of Camilla from Book Eleven. In both these episodes Virgil displays a profoundly ambivalent attitude, a point of view that is sympathetic and critical at the same time. If Dryden's version has any merit, beyond being "variously interesting," it is because it demonstrates, all too clearly, the dubious value of heroic virtue.

"The entire Nisus and Euryalus episode," according to a recent critic, "is a fascinating exploration of moral ambiguity."<sup>2</sup> Nothing indeed could be more ambiguous than the question Nisus poses in his opening speech:

Nisus ait: "dine hunc ardorem mentibus addunt,  
Euryale, an sua cuique deus fit dira cupido?"  
(184-85)

"Do the gods, Euryalus, put this fire in our hearts,  
or does his own wild longing become to each man a god?"  
(Fairclough)

These crucial lines cut to the heart of a tragic paradox: Nisus cannot tell whether he is acting on divine impulse or whether he is being carried away by some delusion of grandeur.<sup>3</sup> One alternative excludes the other, and the outcome of the story hinges on this dilemma:

Then Nisus, thus: Or do the Gods inspire  
This warmth, or make we Gods of our Desire?  
(235-36)

This is one of many places in Virgil's Aeneid where the sententiousness of the Latin seems to have struck a responsive chord in Dryden. Even his bold enjambment ("inspire / This warmth") serves a special purpose: it suggests that Nisus' energy cannot be contained within ordinary bounds. No one else, it seems to me, neither Mandelbaum, whose version sounds like a paraphrase of Fairclough,

And Nisus says: "Euryalus, is it  
the gods who put this fire in our minds,  
or is it that each man's relentless longing  
becomes a god to him?"

nor Fitzgerald, whose version here owes much to Dryden,

"This urge to action, do the gods instil it,  
Or is each man's desire a god to him,  
Euryalus?"

has come so close to the essential Virgil.

The remainder of this speech, a prelude to everything that follows, shows Nisus talking as much to himself as to his companion in arms:

"aut pugnam aut aliquid iamdudum invadere magnum  
mens agitat mihi, nec placida contenta quieta est.  
cernis, quae Rutulos habeat fiducia rerum.  
lumina rara micant, somno vinoque soluti

procubere, silent late loca. percipe porro, (190)  
quid dubitem et quae nunc animo sententia surgat.  
Aenean acciri omnes, populusque patresque,  
exposcunt, mittique viros, qui certa reportent.  
si tibi quae posco promittunt (nam mihi facti  
fama sat est), tumulto videor reperire sub illo (195)  
posse viam ad muros et moenia Pallantea."  
(186-96)

"Long has my heart been astir to dare battle or  
some great deed, and peaceful quiet contents it  
not. Thou seest what faith in their fortunes  
possesses the Rutulians. Few are their gleaming  
lights; relaxed with wine and slumber, they lie  
prone; far and wide reigns silence. Learn then  
what I ponder, and what purpose now rises in my  
mind. People and senate--all cry that Aeneas  
should be summoned, and men be sent to take him  
sure tidings. If they promise the boon I ask for  
thee--for to me the glory of the deed is enough--  
methinks beneath yonder mound I may find a path to  
the walls and fortress of Pallanteum."  
(Fairclough)

According to Dryden:

A gen'rous ardour boils within my Breast,  
Eager of Action, Enemy to Rest:  
This urges me to fight, and fires my Mind,  
To leave a memorable Name behind. (240)  
Thou see'st the Foe secure: how faintly shine  
Their scatter'd Fires! the most in Sleep supine;  
Along the Ground, an easie Conquest lye;  
The wakeful few, the fuming Flaggon ply:  
All hush'd around. Now hear what I revolve; (245)  
A Thought unripe; and scarcely yet resolve.  
Our absent Prince both Camp and Council mourn;  
By Message both wou'd hasten his return:  
If they confer what I demand, on thee,  
(For Fame is Recompense enough for me) (250)  
Methinks, beneath yon Hill, I have espy'd  
A way that safely will my passage guide.  
(237-52)

Here, as elsewhere, Dryden often overstates what Virgil  
understates. Thus Nisus' inner turmoil (*mens agitat mihi*)  
becomes a "gen'rous ardour" that "boils" within his breast  
and that "fires" his mind. The epithet "gen'rous," one of  
the most "loaded" words of the time, derives from the Latin



generosus ("of noble birth"). According to Ben Schneider, the adjective once had strong "ethical connotations," and it described persons who were "high-spirited, gallant, courageous; magnanimous, noble-minded."<sup>4</sup> Life itself could be "generously" expended in service of a noble cause, and Dryden's epithet would seem to suggest that Nisus is willing to sacrifice his own private good for a greater good. That greater good, however, is his own personal glory ("a memorable Name"). "Eager of Action," Nisus is not content to act his part as guardian of the gate (portae custos). His very "Breast," in fact, is an "Enemy to Rest."

In lines 240-45, Dryden presents a vivid picture of the Rutulians at rest. The observation "How faintly shine / Their scatter'd Fires," and the careful contrast between two kinds of careless foe ("the most in Sleep" are set against the "wakeful," though drunken, "few" who ply the "fuming Flaggon")--all these additions heighten the false sense of security (fiducia) of the Rutulians. It is thanks perhaps to his experience as a playwright that Dryden also spells out, more fully than Virgil, the motive and the cue for action of his protagonist. Instead of lying stretched out (procubere), the enemy in Dryden sleep "Supine," a powerful word that prepares us, with its fine Latinity, for the cutthroat butchery to come. If the Rutulians are such an "easie Conquest" (a point which Nisus reiterates in line 429: "Behold a Conquest gain'd without a fight"), then what are we to think of Nisus' desire "To leave a memorable Name

behind?" Clearly, he wants to purchase honor at a rather cheap price.

Midway through his speech, moreover, Nisus starts to sound like a conspirator ("Now hear what I revolve"). Dryden, like Virgil, manages this subtle change in tone with a series of broken clauses, one of which--"All hush'd around"--has something vaguely Shakespearean about it. There is, in fact, a similar moment in The Tempest when Caliban admonishes his cohorts:

Therefore speak softly.  
All's hush'd as midnight yet.  
(IV i 207-08)

The conspiratorial tone continues as Nisus whispers, "Now hear what I revolve; / A Thought unripe; and scarcely yet resolve." The same expression reappears, somewhat altered, in Dryden's account of Tancred, who, spying on his daughter, "Resolv'd his unripe Vengeance to defer" (Sigismonda and Guiscardo, 254). "O early ripe!" Dryden exclaims in one of his original poems, wherein the poet likens himself to Nisus and his younger friend to Euryalus ("To the Memory of Mr. Oldham," 17). Behind the adjective "unripe" lies the subdued metaphor of time as a kind of fruitful womb; from this womb emerges Truth, the proverbial daughter of time (veritas filia temporis).<sup>5</sup> There is a poignant irony in Dryden's evocation of this conventional metaphor; from that initial "unripe" thought ensues a train of fatal events, including, of course, the untimely death of Euryalus himself. These subsequent events themselves reveal the

truth about Nisus' inspiration--that he does indeed make a "God" of his "Desire."

If the sequence of thought from line 249 onward seems hard to follow, that is because this broken syntax mimics the motion of the speaker's mind:

If they confer what I demand, on thee,  
(For Fame is Recompense enough for me)  
Methinks beneath yon Hill, I have espy'd  
A way that safely will my passage guide.

It is "one of Virgil's Beauties," says Dryden in his Dedication of the Georgics, "that having said what he thought convenient, he always left somewhat for the imagination of his Readers to supply" (II, 914). It is left to the reader to supply what exactly the "Camp and Council" will confer on Euryalus. According to R.D. Williams, Nisus means to say that he will get "the glory" and Euryalus "the gifts."<sup>6</sup> There is something else, however, the reader must supply: namely, the unfinished thought which ought to follow the conditional sentence, "If they confer what I demand." The lack of grammatic sequence (a rhetorical device known as anacoluthon) indicates perhaps how reluctant Nisus is to cause offense by declaring his intent--to carry out this scouting mission on his own. As it turns out, however, Euryalus does insist on going--an all too likely reaction, given their attachment to one another. In the concluding line, I have italicized the adverb "safely," and for two reasons: first, it does not appear in Virgil; and second, it underscores the mistaken assumption, on Nisus' part, that he will reach his destination (Pallanteum).

Stunned by the disclosure of Nisus' plan, Euryalus is quick to make a spirited reply, the manner of which, in keeping with his character, is positive and forthright, lacking any trace of doubt, deliberation, or design:

"mene igitur socium summis adiungere rebus,  
Nise, fugis? solum te in tanta pericula mittam? (200)  
non ita me genitor, bellis adsuetus Opheltes,  
Argicolum terrorem inter Troiaequae labores  
sublatum erudiit, nec tecum talia gessi,  
magnanimum Aenean et fata extrema secutus:  
est hic, est animus lucis contemptor, et istum (205)  
qui vita bene credat emi, quo tendis, honorem."  
(199-206)

"Dost thou shrink then, Nisus, from linking me with thee in this high emprise? Shall I send thee alone into such great perils? Not thus did my sire, the old warrior Opheltes, train me as his child amid Argive terrors and the travails of Troy, nor thus at thy side have I played my part, following high-souled Aeneas and his utmost fate. Here, here is a soul that scorns the light, and counts that fame, whereto thou strivest, cheaply bought with life."

(Fairclough)

Beginning with a pair of pointed questions, followed by another pair of emphatic denials (non ita me . . . nec tecum), this emotional crescendo reaches its climax in the affirmation, twice repeated, est hic, est animus. Despite his many changes, Dryden still conforms to the rhetorical contours of the original, saving, as Virgil does, his strongest assertion ("The thing call'd Life") for last:

All this alone, and leaving me behind,  
Am I unworthy, Nisus, to be join'd?  
Think'st thou I can my share of Glory yield,  
Or send thee unassisted to the Field?  
Not so my Father taught my Childhood Arms; (260)  
Born in a Siege, and bred among Alarms!  
Nor is my Youth unworthy of my Friend,  
Nor of the Heav'n-born Heroe I attend.

The thing call'd Life, with ease I can disclaim;  
And think it oversold to purchase Fame. (265)  
(256-65)

It is easy to see from a passage such as this why Dryden admired Virgil's ability to maintain "Majesty in the midst of plainness" (Preface to Sylvae, II, 393). The poetry of both men is none the less impressive for being relatively plain and unadorned. In the first sentence of the Latin (199-200), more of an expostulation than a question, Virgil has put the maximum distance between his personal pronoun (mene) and his subject-predicate (Nise, fugis?). This syntactic separation reinforces the physical separation, the mere idea of which is painful to Euryalus. Similar in sound, the contrasting terms socium and solum make a kind of counterpoint, or phonetic echo, to this plaintive theme. The corresponding couplet (256-57) in Dryden conceals its art in corresponding ways: it too suspends the most important point ("to be join'd") to the very end; it too links together, through rhyme ("behind" / "join'd"), assonance ("I" and "Nisus" also share the same vowel), and alliteration ("alone, and leaving"), words that drive asunder. Dryden has also placed, in this and in the following couplet, an initial spondee ("All this"), the effect of which is something of a metrical surprise. These various devices, if one may call them such, are all the more impressive for being fairly unobtrusive. Unobtrusive, too, is the sheer musicality of Dryden's diction. Although in a line like this, "Or send thee unassisted to the Field?"

(259), the sound may not appear to be an echo to the sense, the same thing may be said of the Latin (solum te in tanta pericula mittam?). In each case, however, the repetition of certain consonants and vowels forms a striking pattern of assonance and alliteration, the expressive value of which lies as much in the meter as in the melody. It is no accident, I think, that Virgil chooses a dactylic measure (tanta pericula) as the vehicle for sending Nisus into such great danger. In his own manner, Dryden shows comparable tact in sending Nisus to the field "unassisted" (note the trochee in the second position and the pyrrhic in the fourth) by strong, supportive, accented syllables.

Euryalus' impassioned outburst might well have sounded like a declamation had Dryden not given it the rough and ragged edges of colloquial speech. Even a common idiom like "born and bred" can give his diction backbone, just where it is needed most:

Not so my Father taught my Childhood Arms;  
Born in a Siege, and bred among Alarms.  
(260-61)

Such verbal pithiness (note the substitution of "Father" for Opheltes, "Siege" for the Argive terror, and "Alarms" for the trials of Troy) bears witness to the generalizing habit of Dryden's imagination--a quality made conspicuous by its absence in many a modern rendering:

Not so did my father, the veteran soldier Opheltes,  
Who brought me up in the midst of Argive terror,  
Of Troy.  
teach me  
the ordeal

(Day Lewis)

No; no, no. I am  
Opheltes' son, a warrior trained among  
Greek terror and Argive suffering.

(Humphries)

That is not how my father Opheltes taught me  
'midst Argive terror and travail of Troy  
when war was habit.

(Copley)

Opheltes, wise in the ways of war, my father  
who reared me through Troy's trials and Argive terrors,  
had never taught me this.

(Mandelbaum)

Born  
For that, was I, and trained for that, amid  
The Argive terror, those hard hours of Troy,  
By a true fighter, one inured to battle,  
My father, Opheltes?

(Fitzgerald)

Lauderdale could do no better, even with Dryden's example  
before him:

My Father ne'er bred me up so, to Arms,  
In Troy's dire seige, and Grecians false Alarms;  
(220-21)

Seeking to retain the historical flavor of the original,  
these authors evoke little, if any, feeling for the past.  
Instead, they fall into what seems a trivial particularity,  
boggling a modern reader (or one of Dryden's day) down in a  
meaningless and superfluous detail.

Here, moreover, is how they handle the heroic gesture  
that concludes this speech:

I am no clinger to life, not I, but rather one  
Who believes it were well exchanged for the renown  
you aim at.  
(Day Lewis)

I have a spirit, not too fond of living,  
Not too dissatisfied to buy with death  
The honor that you strive for.

(Humphries)

My heart--mine, too!--can scorn this world, and hold  
life well lost for the glory you hope to gain.

(Copley)

Mine is a soul that scorns the light of life  
and holds that honor for which you now strive  
as cheaply bought if all its price is life.

(Mandelbaum)

Believe me, here's a spirit that disdains  
Mere daylight! I hold life well spent to buy  
That glory you aspire to.

(Fitzgerald)

Set against these various versions, the aphoristic quality  
of Dryden's adaptation shows itself to even greater  
advantage:

The thing call'd Life, with ease I can disclaim;  
And think it oversold to purchase Fame.

Giving a new twist to an old maxim ("buy cheap and sell  
dear"), Dryden exploits, more fully than Virgil, the  
language of the marketplace, so that life itself becomes the  
crudest of commodities, a mere "thing."

In substituting insouciance for scorn and life for  
light, Dryden shows the influence of the commentator Ruaeus,  
whose prose Interpretatio runs as follows:

Est sane, est animus hic meus negligens vitae;  
et qui putet istam gloriam, ad quam aspiras, bene  
comparari dispendio vitae.

This soul of mine is utterly indifferent to  
life; and it regards that glory (to which you  
now aspire) as something well purchased at  
the expense of life [i.e., a bargain].

I do not quote this excerpt simply to point out parallels  
between Dryden and Ruaeus (as, for instance, between "think  
it" and putet or between "with ease" and negligens), but to  
show how Dryden works as scholar and poet, critic and



creator, at the same time. Despite this radical reshaping of the original, there is nevertheless an analogue to Virgil's poetic meter in the "ease" with which Euryalus can "disclaim" his life; a spondee in the second position ("The thing call'd Life") strengthens that renunciation in a manner which recalls the stern insistence of the Latin (est hīc, est animus lūcīs cōtēptor, et istum).

ii

At the beginning of this episode, Virgil gives a fairly vague description of the enemy camp; later on, when Nisus and Euryalus go about their bloody business, we get a much more vivid view. From a distance, all that can be seen of the Rutulians are their scattered fires; up close, these and other details come into sharper focus:

egressi superant fossas noctisque per umbram  
castra inimica petunt, multis tamen ante futuri  
exitio. passim somnoque vinoque per herbam  
corpora fusa vident, arrectos litore currus,  
inter lora rotasque viros, simul arma iacere,  
vina simul.

(314-19)

Issuing, they cross the trenches, and through the shadow of night seek that fatal camp--yet destined first to be the doom of many. Everywhere they see bodies stretched along the grass in drunken sleep, chariots atilt on the shore, men lying amid wheels and harness, their arms and flagons all about.

(Fairclough)

Here, once again, Dryden magnifies the pictorial element; this time, though, he carries his distortion almost to the point of comic excess:

The Trenches first they pass'd: Then took their Way  
Where their proud Foes in pitch'd Pavilions lay;  
To many fatal, e're themselves were slain:  
They found the careless Hoast dispers'd upon the Plain.  
Who gorg'd, and drunk with Wine, supinely snore;  
Unharness'd Chariots stand along the Shore:  
Amidst the Wheels and Reins, the Goblet by,  
A Medly of Debauch and War they lye.

(420-27)

It is characteristic of Dryden to build his scene in such a way that one key word, "Medly," embraces every particular--soldiers, chariots, wheels, reins, and goblets. In its mixture of epic diction, pathos, satire, and literary parody, this passage can be considered a stylistic medley as well. Those "proud Foes" in their "pitch'd Pavilions," "dispers'd upon the Plain" (note the plosive "p's," denoting contempt), remind this reader of certain scenes in Paradise Lost where

th' Angelic throng  
Disperst in Bands and Files thir Camp extend  
By living Streams among the Trees of Life  
Pavilions numberless, and sudden reard,  
(V 650-53)

and where "all the Plain" lies

Coverd with thick embatteld Squadrons bright,  
Chariots and flaming Armes, and fierie Steeds.  
(VI 15-17)

Dryden's lofty diction, however, is mingled with a lower strain, reminiscent, not of Milton, but of the Cavalier poet Charles Cotton (author of "Scarronides," a travesty of Virgil's Aeneid). From one of Cotton's epigrams Dryden borrowed the pungent phrase "supinely snore":

The drunkard now supinely snores,  
His load of ale sweats through his pores,  
Yet when he wakes, the swine shall find  
A crapula remains behind.<sup>8</sup>

In his lyric line, "To many fatal, e're themselves were slain," Dryden also strikes a plangent note, the sheer musicality of which (e.g., the assonance of "fatal" and "slain," and of "e're" and "were") begs comparison with Virgil (multis tamen ante futuri / exitio). To good effect, Dryden has incorporated the gloss on ante that Ruaeus gives in his notes:

Vel antequam ipsi moriantur, quod subobscurum  
tantum significat.<sup>9</sup>

Or, "before they die themselves," which, somewhat obscurely, [ante] merely signifies.

A recent writer goes to greater length, and with less success, to solicit pathos from the elliptical Latin:

[They] make for the camp  
that will bring death to them--though before that,  
they will be the end of many.

(Mandelbaum)

An equal range and variety of tone distinguishes the passage where Nisus slays his last sleeping victim, "Serranus fair and Young":

From Dice and Wine the Youth retir'd to Rest,  
And puff'd the fummy God from out his Breast:  
Ev'n then he dreamt of Drink and lucky Play;  
More lucky had it lasted 'till the Day.  
(452-55)

Virgil's portrait is also ironic, but the irony is less robust:

Et iuvenem Serranum, illa qui plurima nocte  
luserat, insignis facie, multoque jacebat  
membra deo victus; felix, si protinus illum  
aequasset nocti ludum in lucemque tulisset.  
(335-38)

and youthful Serranus, of wondrous beauty,  
who had played long that night, and lay with  
limbs vanquished by the god's abundance; happy  
he, had he played on, making that game one with  
the night, and pursuing it to the dawn!

(Fairclough)

In Dryden's version, Serranus resembles a Restoration rake, the sort of idle gentleman who spends the afternoon on "Dice, and Drink, and Drabs."<sup>10</sup> Although both poets indulge in a form of word play that makes fun of such a gamester (the turn on "lucky" neatly parallels the turn on luserat and ludum), we should not suppose that Virgil and Dryden are being heartlessly witty at Serranus' expense. This handsome fellow acts as a foil to that other comely youth (quo pulcherior alter / non fuit) who soon will die a gruesome death, as much a victim of his own careless folly as Serranus was.

The dream that Dryden introduces, inasmuch as it appears a natural extension of Serranus' waking life, advances, I think, the verisimilitude of Virgil's portrait. Despite the elegant, even genteel, tone of Dryden's diction (Virgil's Serranus does not retire to rest nor puff the god from out his breast), the "fummy God" that inspires this dream may call to mind other poetic vapors and exhalations. In All for Love, Alexas dismisses the prophetic vision of Serapion as

A foolish dream,  
Bred from the fumes of indigested feasts,  
And holy luxury.

(I 37-39)

A similar pattern of imagery occurs in Paradise Lost, when Adam and Eve awaken

Soon as the force of that fallacious Fruit,  
. . . and grosser sleep,  
Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams  
Encomberd, now had left them.

(IX 1046-51)

However faint and muted Dryden's reminiscence may seem to be, it has some bearing on the present context, for nothing could be more "foolish" or "fallacious" than the dream that overcomes Serranus at the point of death: "Ev'n then he dreamt of Drink and lucky Play."

Virgil follows the practice of his master Homer and inserts in the midst of all this slaughter an epic simile:

impastus ceu plena leo per ovia turban  
(suadet enim vesana fames) manditque trahitque  
molle pecus metumque metu, fremit ore cruento.

(339-41)

Even so, an unfed lion, rioting through full sheepfolds, for the madness of hunger constrains him, mangles and rends the feeble flock that are dumb with fear, and growls with blood-stained mouth.

(Fairclough)

This lion is a splendid beast. One can almost hear his grinding jaws (manditque trahitque) and blood-thirsty roar (ore cruento) as he tears into the tender flock. The corresponding simile in Homer is not as graphic nor as picturesque:

As on a flock of goats or sheep, unshepherded  
and undefended, a baleful lion falls,  
the son of Tydeus fell upon the Thracians  
until he had killed twelve.<sup>11</sup>

The terms of this comparison are simple and direct:

Diomedes and Thracians, lion and flock, predator and prey.

The clarity and brevity of Homer's figure, which Auerbach would say is fully "externalized" and which Arnold would no doubt call completely "objective,"<sup>12</sup> illustrates the swiftness and sureness with which the hero falls upon the undefended troops. In Virgil, however, the relation between tenor and vehicle is quite complex, not to say problematic. To what extent does Nisus share the insane hunger of the lion? How closely do the Rutulians resemble a flock of sheep, huddled together, speechless with fear? If Virgil, unlike Homer, invites such speculation, that is because of a certain incongruity between subject and similitude.

Milton's adaptation of this same motif offers even greater incongruities:

As when a prowling Wolfe,  
Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,  
Watching where Shepherds pen thir Flocks at eeven  
In hurdl'd Cotes amid the field secure,  
Leaps ore the fence with ease into the Fould.  
(PL IV 183-87)

Part of a longer passage in which Satan is likened to a wolf, a thief, and a cormorant, this excerpt shows how well Milton can incorporate into his Christian epic a piece of pagan poetry. This "new haunt" is Paradise; the "prey," neither Thracians nor Rutulians, but Adam and Eve; the "Shepherds" and "thir Flocks," biblical rather than Arcadian figures. There is something prideful about the way that Satan "at one slight bound high overleap'd all bound" (181). Dryden, I think, is also getting at a kind of essential arrogance when he says of Nisus:

The famish'd Lyon thus, with Hunger bold,  
O'erleaps the Fences of the Nightly Fold;  
And tears the peaceful Flocks: With silent Awe  
Trembling they lye, and pant beneath his Paw.  
(456-59)

In the common currency of epic imagery, where emblematic animals seem interchangeable, it is altogether fitting that Dryden's "famish'd Lyon," like Milton's "prowling Wolfe," "O'erleaps the Fences of the Nightly Fold." The relevance of Dryden's reminiscence is twofold: it serves to undermine the glory of an exploit that is carried out against such easy adversaries; at the same time, it enhances, for English readers at any rate, the epic grandeur of the tale.

By perpetuating Milton, Dryden, furthermore, alters our perception of the poets who preceded and succeeded Virgil.<sup>13</sup> To complete the circle of this complex cultural and literary interplay, consider the following simile from Pope's Iliad, a version as much indebted to Dryden, Milton, and Virgil as it is to Homer:

So the grim Lion, from his nightly Den,  
O'erleaps the Fences and invades the Pen;  
On Sheep or Goats, resistless in his way,  
He falls, and foaming rends the guardless Prey.  
(X 564-67)

Pope's phrase, "resistless in his way," recalls what Moloch says in Paradise Lost:

let us rather choose  
Armd with Hell flames and fury all at once  
Ore Heav'ns high Towrs to force resistless way.  
(II 60-62)

Needless to say, the mediation of previous poets in no way diminishes the achievement of either verse translator, each having modified the original text to suit his own

interpretation. Thus Dryden intensifies the terror of Virgil's sheep ("Trembling they lye, and pant beneath his Paw"), and Pope the savagery of Homer's lion (which "foaming rends the guardless Prey").

iii

"Those who deal out death," says Kenneth Quinn, "with so little thought for their victims are perhaps not so greatly to be pitied after all when death overtakes them."<sup>14</sup> There is no doubt, in Dryden's poem, that such men deserve little pity indeed. An important turning point in Virgil's story comes when Nisus finally exclaims, absistamus ("let us stop and go away"):

"poenarum exhaustum satis est, via facta per hostis."  
(356)

"Vengeance is sated to the full; a path is cut  
through the foe."  
(Fairclough)

Dryden takes the image of satiety (exhaustum satis est) to its limit:

No more, my Friend,  
Here let our gluttred execution end:  
A Lane through slaughter'd Bodies we have made.  
(479-81)

The word "gluttred" (which alliterates and consonates with "let" and "slaughter'd") has, it seems to me, the same guttural quality that we find in Milton, when he speaks of Sin as being "crammd and gorg'd" with "gluttred offal" (PL X 632-33).



Later on, Dryden shows Nisus and Euryalus leaving the camp, "Proud of their conquest, prouder of their Prey" (499). This line has no basis whatsoever in Virgil; it is a telling insertion, nevertheless, for at this moment of apparent conquest they come upon a troop of cavalry, sent in as reinforcement, under the command of Volscens. Here is Virgil's description of the neighboring wood to which Nisus and Euryalus run for safety:

Obiciunt equites sese ad divortia nota  
hinc atque hinc omnemque abitum custode coronant.  
silva fuit late dumis atque ilice nigra  
horrida, quam densi complerant undique sentes;  
rara per occultos lucebat semita calles.  
(379-83)

On this side and that the horsemen bar the well-known crossways and with sentinels guard every outlet. The forest spread wide with shaggy thickets and dark ilex; dense briars filled it on every side; here and there glimmered the path through the hidden glades.  
(Fairclough)

According to the British historian, Keith Thomas, "when the Elizabethans spoke of a 'wilderness,' they meant not a barren waste, but a dense, uncultivated wood, like Shakespeare's Forest of Arden, 'a desert inaccessible under the shade of melancholy boughs.'<sup>15</sup> Like many a "wilderness" in Spenser and Milton, Virgil's silva (whose crossways are well known (nota) only to the sentinels guarding the outlets) seems invested with numinous and ominous qualities. Take, for example, this passage from the Faerie Queene, where Sir Guyon and Britomart

came into a Forrest wyde,  
Whose hideous horror and sad trembling sound

Full griesly seem'd: Therein they long did ryde,  
Yet tract of living creatures none they found,  
Save Beares, Lions, Buls, which roamed them around;  
(III I xiv)

or this from Comus, where

                  their [the young people's] way  
Lies through the perplex'd paths of this drear Wood;  
The nodding Horror of whose shady Brows  
Threats the forlorn and wandring Passanger;  
(36-39)<sup>15</sup>

or this from Paradise Lost, where

                  thick entwin'd  
As one continu'd brake, the undergrowth  
Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplext  
All path of Man or Beast that passd that way.  
(IX 174-77)

Milton's phrase, "the perplex'd paths of this drear Wood," is modeled on lines 391-92 of Virgil (perplexum iter . . . fallacis iter). It is one of many "Latin Elegancies of Virgil" which Milton, according to Dryden, "so copiously translated" (II, 610).

Dryden makes his own contribution to this ancient topos by turning Virgil's silva into a leafy labyrinth:

The speedy Horse all passages belay,  
And spur their smoaking Steeds to Cross their way;  
And watch each Entrance of the winding Wood;  
Black was the Forest, thick with Beech it stood:  
Horrid with Fern, and intricate with Thorn,  
Few Paths of Humane Feet or Tracks of Beasts were worn.  
(515-20)

Although Dryden took his rendering, "Few Paths of Human Feet," partly from Ruæus (Paucae viae . . . per secretos tramites),<sup>16</sup> it is with these earlier English poets that Dryden has his closest affinity. Spenser's "Forrest wyde," Milton's "drear Wood," Dryden's "winding Wood," all convey the notion of "horror"--horror in the double sense of

something bristling or shaggy, dreadful or foreboding. Like Dante's selva oscura, these various wildernesses are emblematic--interior as well as exterior landscapes (landscapes which represent the bewildered and perplexed condition of those who have lost their "way" in life).

At the beginning of this episode, Nisus thought he had "espy'd a way that safely" would his "passage guide." Now, however, he and Euryalus find themselves in a "winding Wood" (winding with "Passages," "Paths," and "Tracks," and entangled with "horrid" and "intricate" undergrowth). From this maze of encirclement and entrapment, no escape seems possible:

Black was the Forest, thick with Beech it stood:  
Horrid with Fern, and intricate with Thorn.

Here we see quite clearly how Dryden's expressive syntax (parallel triplets put up a thicket of their own), meter (every modifier receives a heavy stress), and sound (the lines bristle with assonance and consonance) can produce a kind of verbal shudder, or frisson, which rivals the original:

silva fuit late dumis atque ilice nigra  
horrida, quam densi complerant undique sentes.  
(381-82)

(The forest stretches all the way from silva to horrida; the words quam densi complerant thicken with successive spondees; dark "a's," shrill "i's" and "e's," make a sad, trembling music.) Compare, if you will, the following version by Robert Fitzgerald:

The wood itself  
Covered much ground, all bristling underbrush,  
Dark ilex, and dense briars everywhere,  
The path a rare trace amid tracks grown over.

One may admire, with a recent reviewer, Fitzgerald's "deft phrasing" and "sure control of English rhythms"<sup>17</sup> (note, for instance, the way he takes Fairclough's "dark ilex" and "dense briars" and turns them into emphatic spondees); at the same time, however, Fitzgerald seldom shows what Dryden so often has at his command: a wealth of literary artifice and poetic resonance.

To take but one example: when Nisus leaves Euryalus behind,

again he ventures back:  
And treads the Mazes of his former track.  
(531-32)

Thanks to one sounding phrase, this couplet spans the interval of six books, calling to mind another poignant moment when Aeneas, having lost Creusa, says:

I tread my former Tracks: through Night explore  
Each passage, ev'ry Street I cross'd before.  
(II 1022-23)

Dryden, of course, did not invent this reminiscence; a similar echo can be heard in Virgil too:

simul et vestigia retro  
observata legit dumis silentibus errat.  
(IX 392-93)

Therewith he scans and retraces his footsteps,  
and wanders in the silent thickets.  
(Fairclough)

repeto et vestigia retro  
observata sequor per noctem et lumine lustror.  
(II 753-54)

I mark and follow back my steps in the night,  
scanning them with close eye.

(Fairclough)

A memorable expression like vestigia retro / observata demands, I think, an equally memorable expression in English. This Dryden has achieved through his poetic idiom "to tread one's former track" (an apparent filler, "Mazes" is a substitution for perplexum iter in the preceding line, 391). Other translators, to be sure, have also taken note of Virgil's repetition; none, however, has found an answerable style to trigger an equal shock of recognition:

Backward in his tracks,  
As he recalled them, now he went, and strayed  
Through silent undergrowth;

(Fitzgerald, Book IX)

and so on backward,  
Tracing my own footsteps through the night.

(Fitzgerald, Book II)

Fitzgerald, and others, seldom demonstrate what Dryden so well understood: that even Virgil "himself, whether out of necessity or choice, has often express'd the same thing in the same words" (III, 1057).

It is out of choice rather than necessity that Dryden repeats himself in the following couplet:

He winds the Wood, and list'ning hears the noise  
Of trampling Coursers, and the Riders voice.

(533-34)

Here the statement "He winds the Wood" does double duty: first, as a rendering of dumis silentibus errat; and second, as a conscious echo of that "winding Wood" (517) into which Euryalus had wandered some fifteen lines earlier. It is because of such self-reflective and reflecting language that

Dryden, not unlike his master Virgil, can complicate the texture of his poetic narrative.

iv

I would like to close this chapter with two contrasting images: first, the slaying of Euryalus, transfigured by Virgil into an epic simile; second, a horrid spectacle, the brandishing of Nisus' head and that of his companion before the Trojan troops. Set side by side, these different images of death and dying demonstrate the deep ambivalence that underlies the entire episode.

Drawing upon such literary precedents as Homer (Iliad VIII 306-8) and Catullus (XI 21-42), Virgil depicts the slaying of Euryalus in the following terms:<sup>18</sup>

volvitur Euryalus leto, pulchrosque per artus  
it cruor inque umeros cervix collapsa recumbit:  
purpureus veluti cum flos succisus aratro  
languescit moriens, lassove papvera collo  
demisere caput, pluvia cum forte gravantur.  
(433-37)

Euryalus rolls over in death; athwart his lovely limbs runs the blood, and his drooping neck sinks on his shoulder: as when a purple flower, severed by the plough, droops in death; or as poppies, with weary neck, bow the head, when weighted by some chance shower.

(Fairclough)

Of the original simile in Homer, Alexander Pope observed:

"There is such a Sweetness in the Comparison, that it makes us pity the Youth's Fall, and almost feel his wound."

"This," Pope also noted, "is finely improved by the Roman Author with the Particulars of succisus aratro and lasso

collo" (TE, VII, 415). Not altogether faithful to the particulars of the Latin, Dryden's version is nonetheless musical and sensitive.

Down fell the beauteous Youth; the yawning Wound  
Gush'd out a Purple Stream, and stain'd the Ground.  
His snowy neck reclines upon his Breast,  
Like a fair Flow'r by the keen Share oppress'd:  
Like a white Poppy sinking on the Plain,  
Whose heavy Head is overcharg'd with Rain.  
(579-84)

As with those larger than life figures in Spenser's Faerie  
Queene--the Giant in Book One,

Large streames of blood out of the trunked stocke  
Forth gushed;  
(Canto VII, Stanza x)

or Cymocles in Book Two,

Our of the Wound the red blood flowed fresh,  
That underneath his feet soone made a purple plesh--  
(Canto VIII, Stanza xxxvi)

one may find this overflow of blood a bit extravagant.  
There is, however, a certain propriety to Dryden's diction,  
the most obvious example of which is the metrical explosion  
created by his strong enjambment, "yawning Wound / Gush'd  
out"; Virgil, too, though much more subtly, also draws out  
the sense from one verse to the next (per artus / it cruor).

Where Dryden really rises to the occasion, doing  
justice to both meter and meaning, is in the similitude  
itself. There we find an exquisite command of expressive  
variation, as, for instance, in lines 582 and 583 where an  
initial trochee ("Like a") followed by a spondee in the  
second position ("fair Flow'r"/"white Poppy") enforces the

"likeness" of each comparison. By modulating his stresses--  
a phyrrie and spondee in 582 ("by the keen Share") and a  
phyrrie after "sinking" in 583--Dryden produces an  
appropriate suspension for each fallen flower, analogous to  
the "dying fall" that comes after moriens and caput. The  
piercing assonance of "keen" and "sinking" may make us,  
echoing the response of Pope, almost feel the wound. There  
is more to Dryden's version (that "huge temple of sound," as  
Van Doren called it)<sup>19</sup> than mere music. Just as Virgil's  
audience would have known that one of the "Particulars" Pope  
so much admired came, in fact, from a poem of Catullus, so  
Dryden's readers, it seems to me--the literate ones at any  
rate--would have recognized that some of his particulars  
came from an earlier English author, namely Milton, who used  
this very same pastoral motif, in Samson Agonistes, to  
illustrate the languishing demeanor of Dalila:

Yet on she moves, now stands and eies thee fixt,  
About t'have spoke, but now, with head declin'd  
Like a fair flower surcharg'd with dew, she weeps.  
(726-28)

How Dryden has gone about assimilating Milton is quite  
clear: he breaks up line 728, keeping the first part ("like  
a fair flower") intact, and changing the second part  
("surcharg'd with dew") to suit the sense of the Latin.  
Pope, apparently, liked Dryden's adaptation well enough to  
repeat the same expression ("overcharg'd with Rain") in his  
Homer:

As full blown Poppies overcharg'd with Rain  
Decline the Head, and drooping kiss the Plain,  
So sinks the Youth.

(Iliad VIII 371-73)



Any such "help from beyond the poem," says Douglas Knight of Pope's Homer, "is only valuable if it is absorbed fully enough to be effective within the poem."<sup>20</sup> Dryden's reminiscence, I would suggest, is chiefly valuable because it enhances our perception that beauty, youth, and love (qualities that belong to all these people--Nisus' Euryalus, Catullus' Lesbia, Samson's Dalila) are subject to loss, decay, and death.

No sweet comparison or apt similitude tempers, in the end, the shocking fate of Nisus and his friend:

quin ipsa arrectis (visu miserabile) in hastis  
praefigunt capita et multo clamore sequuntur  
Euryali et Nisi.  
Aeneadae duri murorum in parte sinistra  
opposuere aciem (nam dextera cingitur amni)  
ingentisque tenent fossas et turribus altis  
stant maestis; simul ora virum praefixa movebant,  
nota nimis miseris atroque fluentia tabo.  
(465-472)

Nay, on uplifted spears, O piteous sight! they  
affix and follow with loud clamour the heads, the  
very heads, of Euryalus and Nisus. On the  
rampart's left side--for the right is girded by  
river--the hardy sons of Aeneas have set their  
opposing line, hold the broad trenches, and on the  
high towers stand sorrowing, moved withal by those  
uplifted heads, that, alas! they know too well,  
now dripping with dark gore.

(Fairclough)

Taken together, the eloquent hemistich Euryali et Nisi, the telling turn from praefigunt to praefixa, the long pause after stant maestis, the last unnerving detail (tabo), all these particulars are meant to move us, as the ghastly sight was meant to move the tough and sturdy (duri) soldiers of Aeneas.

This general and spontaneous display of barbarism becomes, in Dryden's version, a personal and calculated act of terror on the part of Turnus:

This done, to give new Terror to his Foes,  
The Heads of Nisus, and his Friend he shows,  
Rais'd high on pointed Spears: A ghastly Sight; (620)  
Loud peals of Shouts ensue, and barbarous Delight.

Mean time the Trojans run, where Danger calls,  
They line their Trenches, and they man their Walls:  
In Front extended to the left they stood:  
Safe was the right surrounded by the Flood. (625)  
But casting from their Tow'rs a frightful view,  
They saw the Faces, which too well they knew;  
Tho' then disguis'd in Death, and smear'd all o're  
With Filth obscene, and dropping putrid Gore.  
(618-29)

It often happens, according to William Frost, that "an analysis may have to be made not only of single words but of the entire passage--perhaps even of the entire poem--in which the replacement occurs."<sup>21</sup> Dryden's concluding couplet (628-29) calls for the kind of analysis that Frost is advocating. The way these faces are presented when "disguis'd in Death" brings to mind another incident, the famous footrace in Book Five where Nisus, having lost his footing on a slippery patch of ground, ends up being "smear'd" with "Filth" and "Gore":

The careless Victor had not mark'd his Way;  
But treading where the treach'rous Puddle lay,  
His Heels flew up; and on the grassy Floor,  
He fell, besmear'd with Filth, and Holy Gore.  
(430-34)

"Careless" in Book Five, Nisus is said to be "thoughtless of his Friend" in Book Nine (524), and this self-regarding behavior seems very much at odds with the kind of selfless love which such a "gen'rous Couple" (292) ought to represent

(it is only after Euryalus is slain that Nisus, in revenge, rushes to meet his own death--not so much a sacrifice as a futile self-immolation). In juxtaposing these two scenes from Books Five and Nine, Dryden also brings about a tragi-comic comparison/contrast, the sacrificial blood with which Nisus is smeared, in itself a matter of mirth, serving as a grim reminder of the gore that will disfigure both these men. Though Dryden may have a cruder sense of the grotesque than Virgil, there is nonetheless a powerful irony in heroic valor thus presented and thus rewarded.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>"Dryden's Aeneid," Arion II (1963), 31.

<sup>2</sup>Roger A. Hornsby, Patterns of Action in the Aeneid (Iowa City: Iowa Univ. Press, 1970), p. 65.

<sup>3</sup>For a discussion of cupido, see Brooks Otis, Virgil: A Study in Civilized Poetry, pp. 349-50.

<sup>4</sup>The Ethos of Restoration Comedy (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1971), p. 22.

<sup>5</sup>This "old saying" was brought to my attention by Professor Aubrey L. Williams. See An Approach to Congreve (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1979), p. 112.

<sup>6</sup>The Aeneid of Virgil, II, 292.

<sup>7</sup>Ruaeus, p. 418.

<sup>8</sup>Stanza XVIII from "Night Quatrains," Poems of Charles Cotton, ed. John Buxton (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1958). The same phrase also appears in Jonson's seremonial poem, A Panegyre:

Where men commit blacke incest with their faultz;  
And snore supinely in the stall of sin.

(10-11)

See The Works of Ben Jonson, ed. C.H. Herford, Percy and Evelyn Simpson (1941; rpt. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), VII, 113.

<sup>9</sup>Ruaeus, p. 423.

<sup>10</sup>Cf. The First Satyr of Persius: "On Dice, and Drink, and Drabs, they spend their Afternoon" (279).

<sup>11</sup>Robert Fitzgerald, The Iliad (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1974), p. 244.

<sup>12</sup>See Erich Auerbach, Mimesis (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1953), p. 3: "All this [the recognition scene in Homer's Odyssey] is scrupulously externalized and narrated in leisurely fashion"; Matthew Arnold, "On Translating Homer," The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, ed. R.H. Super (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1961), I, 111: "Homer invariably composes 'with his eye on the object,' whether the object be a moral or a material one."

<sup>13</sup>In this instance, Dryden did not realize that Virgil himself was perpetuating Homer: "From what Book of Homer had Virgil his Episode of Nysus and Euryalus? (III, (1034)).

<sup>14</sup>Virgil's Aeneid: A Critical Description, p. 205.

<sup>15</sup>Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), p. 194.

<sup>16</sup>Ruaeus, p. 426.

<sup>17</sup>Bernard Knox, "Aeneas Rides Again," The New Republic (November 28, 1983), 16.

<sup>18</sup>For the multiple significance of Virgil's allusions, see W.R. Johnson, Darkness Visible (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1976), pp. 59-66.

<sup>19</sup>John Dryden: A Study of His Poetry, p. 63.

<sup>20</sup>Pope and the Heroic Tradition, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup>Dryden and the Art of Translation, p. 32.

CHAPTER FIVE  
"A WARRIOR DAME"

The footrace in Book Five, in itself a minor incident, prepares us for the episode of Nisus and Euryalus in Book Nine; Virgil makes use of another predictive incident at the end of Book Seven, when he introduces a character whose story also unfolds four books later. This character, Camilla, makes a magnificent appearance riding at the rear of a long and glorious procession of Ausonian heroes. It is important to realize that Camilla "is Virgil's own creation, not heard of before him or after him."<sup>1</sup> In all likelihood, a Roman audience would have been fascinated and startled, perhaps even horrified, by this portrait of a female soldier who prevails in combat over all her male opponents. Virgil himself makes no explicit judgement on Camilla. We, as readers, are left to form our own evaluation by what she does, by what other characters say about her ("She contains an Army in herself alone," says Dryden's Turnus in Book Eleven, 668), and by what the author suggests in the way of implicit commentary. It is Dryden's merit as a translator that he gives full play to the ambiguous elements (fantasy and reality, beauty and brutality) which comprise her character.

hos super advenit Volsca de gente Camilla,  
agmen agens equitem et florentis aere catervas,  
bellatrix, non illa colo calathisque Minervae (805)

femineas adsueta manus, sed proelia virgo  
dura pati cursuque pedum praevertere ventos.  
illa vel intactae segetis per summa volaret  
gramina nec teneras cursu laessisset aristas;  
vel mare per medium, fluctu suspensa tumentis, (810)  
ferret iter, celeres nec tingeret aequore plantas.  
illam omnis tectis agrisque effusa iuventus  
turbaque miratus matrum et prospectat euntem,  
attonitis inhians animis, ut regius ostro  
velet honos leves umeros, ut fibula crinem (815)  
auro internectat, Lycium ut gerat ipsa pharetram  
et pastorem praefixa cuspidam myrtum.  
(803-817)

To crown the array comes Camilla, of Volscian race, leading her troop of horse, and squadrons gay with brass,--a warrior-maid, never having trained her woman's hands to Minerva's distaff or basket of wool, but hardy to bear the battle-brunt and in speed of foot to outstrip the winds. She might have flown o'er the topmost blades of unmown corn, nor in her course have bruised the tender ears; or sped her way o'er mid sea, poised above the swelling wave, nor dipped her swift feet in the flood. All the youth, streaming from house and field, and thronging matrons marvel, and gaze at her as she goes; agape with wonder how the glory of royal purple drapes her smooth shoulders; how the clasp entwines her hair with gold; how her own hands bear a Lycian quiver and the pastoral myrtle tipped with steel.

(Fairclough)

"This piece of classical poetry," says Erich Auerbach, "is carefully constructed and rich in phonetic and syntactic devices."<sup>2</sup> The statement comes from a brilliant essay entitled "Camilla, or the Rebirth of the Sublime," at the end of which (after much rhetorical/structural analysis) Auerbach offers the remarkable insight:

Yet the whole is quiet, self-contained, pure unreflecting epiphany; and this epiphany in turn embodies the character and quite unmistakably, though undemonstrably, the destiny which belongs to the character.<sup>3</sup>

The epiphany is "unreflecting" not on Virgil's part but on the part of Camilla and the onlookers who follow her

progress. More effectively than any commentary, Dryden's version demonstrates the "destiny which belongs" to such a character; as one would expect, his version is also "carefully constructed and rich in phonetic and syntactic devices," some of them analogous to Virgil's, others plainly not:

Last from the Volscians fair Camilla came;  
And led her warlike Troops, a Warriour Dame: (1095)  
Unbred to Spinning, in the Loom unskill'd,  
She chose the nobler Pallas of the Field.  
Mix't with the first, the fierce Virago fought,  
Sustain'd the Toils of Arms, the Danger sought:  
Outstrip't the Winds in speed upon the Plain, (1100)  
Flew o're the Fields, nor hurt the bearded Grain:  
She swept the Seas, and as she skimm'd along,  
Her flying Feet unbath'd on Billows hung.  
Men, Boys, and Women stupid with Surprise,  
When e're she passes, fix their wond'ring Eyes: (1105)  
Longing they look, and gaping at the Sight,  
Devour her o're and o're with vast delight.  
Her purple Habit sits with such a Grace  
On her smooth Shoulders, and so suits her Face:  
Her Head with Ringlets of her Hair is crown'd, (1110)  
And in a Golden Caul the Curls are bound.  
She shakes her myrtle Jav'lin: And, behind,  
Her Lycian quiver dances in the Wind.  
(1094-1113)

Both Dryden and Virgil use syntactic inversion (hos super) to place Camilla at the end of the opening line. Dryden, moreover, enhances this effect by starting his sentence with the adverb "Last" and by alliterating this accented word with "led," which realigns Camilla at the head of her troops. According to Auerbach, it is "the forcefully isolated apposition bellatrix which states the theme"<sup>4</sup> of Virgil's passage. With a relish unlike that of any other translator, Dryden pursues the implications of this theme, exploiting every opportunity for verbal and dramatic irony.

To ensure, for instance, that his own apposition ("Warriour Dame") be "forcefully isolated," he sets it off at the end of the couplet where it receives even greater emphasis, thanks to the parallel epithet "warlike Troops." This strengthening of the poetic line compensates, I think, for the weakening of the poetic image florentis aere catervas. But lest the reader concur with Wordsworth that "whenever Virgil can be fairly said to have his eye upon his object, Dryden always spoils the passage," note the vivid verbal picture Dryden paints when, four books later, Virgil repeats this very same line:<sup>5</sup> "[she] heads a Squadron, terrible to sight, / With glitt'ring Shields, and Brazen Armour bright" (XI 668-69). One modern translator, at any rate, has been happy to borrow Dryden's imagery:

With these, Camilla of the Volscian tribe  
leads on her band of horsemen, squadrons bright  
with brazen armor. [my italics]  
(Mandelbaum)

It is because of her unusual upbringing that Camilla has become a "Warriour Dame," and the chiasitic arrangement of the following couplet gives pointed expression to this theme:

Unbred to Spinning, in the Loom unskill'd,  
She chose the nobler Pallas of the Field.  
(1096-97)

We shall learn in Book Eleven why Camilla has been "unbred" (the internal rhyme with "led" supports the idea of a causal connection) to things an ordinary girl would take for granted, while to understand what Dryden means by "the nobler Pallas" (there is a pun here on the Latin word for mantle or



robe, palla) requires some knowledge of classical mythology. Pallas Athena is goddess of domestic arts and goddess of warfare; in rejecting one for the other, Camilla makes the "nobler" choice. Athena, however, like her Roman counterpart Minerva, is also goddess of wisdom, and this is surely her "noblest" attribute. Many things contribute to Camilla's death on the field of battle, and lack of wisdom, Dryden seems to suggest, is one important cause of her demise.

There is no doubt that Dryden wants to glorify this maiden who, Virgil tells us, was trained to bear the hardships of war (proelia virgo / dura pati); it is apparent, too, that Dryden wants to shock the reader by turning Camilla into a hardened campaigner:

Mix't with the first, the fierce Virago fought,  
Sustain'd the Toils of Arms, the Danger sought.  
(1198-99)

Before we condemn Dryden out of hand for coarsening the tone,<sup>6</sup> for losing the pathos, of Virgil's language, we should note that dura is a double modifier, agreeing with virgo as well as proelia, and that the adjective "fierce" reflects a real ambiguity in the Latin. "Virago," which nowadays is synonymous with "shrew," meant in Dryden's day "a woman of masculine strength and spirit" (from the Latin vir).<sup>7</sup> A recent critic of Virgil, Mario A. DiCesare, comes to the same conclusion as Dryden: "Camilla is a bellatrix but she is also a virgo: the two nouns enclose lines 805-06 and give virgo the added meaning of virago."<sup>8</sup> Pope also

sensed the ambivalent spirit of Dryden's phrase when he used it, in Rape of the Lock, as a mock-heroic epithet for

Belinda:

To Arms, to Arms! the fierce Virago cries,  
And swift as Lightning to the Combate flies.  
(V 37-38)

In a celebrated couplet from An Essay on Criticism,

Not so, when swift Camilla scours the Plain,  
Flies o'er th'unbending Corn, and skims along the Main,  
(372-73)

and in some later verses from Homer's Iliad,

These [horses] lightly skimming, where they swept the Plain,  
Nor ply'd the Grass, nor bent the tender Grain;  
And when along the level Seas they flew,  
Scarce on the Surface curl'd the briny Dew,  
(XX 270-73)

Pope kept in mind Dryden's Camilla, repeating, in the first instance, the same verbal phrases ("Flies o'er," "skims along"), and in the second instance, the same pair of rhyme words ("Plain"/"Grain") and the same parallel structure ("nor bent the tender Grain"):

Outstrip't the winds in speed upon the Plain,  
Flew o're the Fields, nor hurt the bearded Grain:  
She swept the Seas, and as she skimm'd along,  
Her flying Feet unbathed on Billows hung.  
(1100-03)

In appropriating Dryden, Pope is making skillful use of an earlier writer, but he is also re-enacting, for his own age, the poetic kinship of two ancient authors. "Virgil," says Pope in his commentary on Homer,

has imitated these Lines, and adapts what Homer says of these Horses to the Swiftness of Camilla. The Reader will easily perceive that Virgil's is almost a literal Translation. He has imitated the very run of the Verses, which flow nimbly away in Dactyls, and as swift as the Wind they describe.  
(TE, VIII, 405)

Though "Virgil's is almost a literal Translation," it differs from Homer in one important respect. As T.E. Page has noted, Virgil "does not say what Camilla did but what she might do, what anyone, seeing her run, might imagine her doing."<sup>9</sup> There is nothing conditional about Dryden's account, wherein one active verb follows another ("sought: / Outstrip't") as if this were something Camilla actually did. Dryden's fidelity to Virgil, as Pope's to Homer, lies in his ability to imitate "the very run of the verses." With the exception of line 810 (vēl mare pēr mediūm, flūctū sūspēnsa tumentī), these verses do "flow nimbly away in Dactyls." By alternating lightly stressed ("and as she skimm'd along") and heavily accented ("unbath'd on Billows hung") syllables, Dryden creates an equally strong prosodic contrast. The postponement, moreover, of the verb "hung" makes Camilla appear to be poised in mid air, a feeling that is reinforced by the unexpected spondee in that suspended phrase "unbath'd on Billows," the only metrical foot which does not fly. (This is not unlike what Virgil does when he places an expressive pause, in the third foot, between medium and fluctu.) To show how the horses of Erichthonius "run over the standing Corn, and Surface of Waters, without making any Impression" (TE VIII, 405), Pope creates a different sort of prosodic contrast. Whereas the rhythm of his penultimate line (272) seems absolutely "level," his final verse ripples, as it were, thanks to an initial trochee and an ingenious pattern of phonic echoes ("Scarce on the Surface

curl'd the briny Dew"), assonance, consonance, and alliteration.

In lines 811-12, Virgil tells us that a crowd of people comes pouring out from house and field to marvel at Camilla (illam) as she passes by (euntem). The extreme disjunction of these two words, the displacement of a noun from its participle, is Virgil's way of making his poetic syntax represent the subjective viewpoint of the spectators themselves. By distancing his compound subject ("Men, Boys, and Women") from his predicate, Dryden produces an analogous effect:

Men, Boys, and Women stupid with Surprise,  
Where e're she passes, fix their wond'ring Eyes:  
Longing they look, and gaping at the Sight,  
Devour her o're and o're with vast Delight.  
(1104-07)

To heighten the impression of a gathering throng, Virgil packs his line with successive spondees (īllam ōm̄nīs tēctīs āgr̄isque ēffusa). Though Dryden does not catch this particular effect, he carries the popular enthusiasm even further than Virgil, piling one descriptive term upon another ("stupid," in the literal sense of being "dumbfounded," from the Latin stupens, "wond'ring," "longing," "gaping"), in preparation for a prolonged and protracted feasting of the senses: "Devour her o're and o're with vast Delight." The spacing of the long back vowels, the consonantal linking of "Devour" and "vast" (especially with the British pronunciation), seem to suggest a wide-open mouth: attonitis inhians animis.

This is not the only place in Dryden's Aeneid where such imagery occurs. In the banquet scene at the end of Book One, Dido looked upon Aeneas, "And drank large Draughts of Love with vast Delight" (1050). Later on, in Book Eight, Aeneas admires the armor that Venus sets before him:

Proud of the Gift, he rowl'd his greedy sight  
Around the Work, and gaz'd with vast delight.  
(819-20)

"Virgil call'd upon me," says Dryden in his Dedication, "in ev'ry line for some new word: And I paid so long, that I was almost Banckrupt" (III, 1058). One might be tempted to agree were it not for the fact that in each passage where the phrase at hand appears there is someone, or something, worthy of admiration.

Virgil conveys the breath-taking beauty of Camilla through an anaphoric sequence of ut clauses (814-17), each of which adds to the growing astonishment of the gaping crowd.<sup>10</sup> Dryden's many embellishments make a prettier, in some respects a livelier (she "shakes" her javelin; her quiver "dances in the Wind") portrait; but there are moments, as for instance in the expansive phrase, "with Ringlets of her Hair," when he seems to stretch his material mainly for the sake of filling out a couplet (1105-06). This phrase, however, may not have seemed expansive to Pope, who put it to good use in The Rape of the Lock:

Some thrid the mazy Ringlets of her Hair;  
Some hang upon the Pendants of her Ear.  
(II 139-40)

Any apparent slackness is taken up in the taut verse that

follows: "And in a Golden Caul the Curls are bound." This is due in part to the phonetic "binding" of consonance (the terminal [l] in three stressed syllables) and alliteration (the initial [k] in two closely paired words). Here, too, Dryden has coined a striking phrase that reappears elsewhere in the poem. A "caul," according to the OED, is a kind of "knitted cap or head-dress, often richly ornamented," and we find it decking other characters--Dido, in Book Four:

Her flowing Hair, a Golden Caul restrains;  
A golden Clasp, the Tyrian Robe sustains;  
(198-99)

and Pallas, in Book Eleven:

That when the yellow Hair in Flame shou'd fall,  
The catching Fire might burn the Golden Caul.  
(109-10)

In none of these passages does "Golden Caul" have a lexical equivalent in the Latin, and the same is true of that other phrase "with vast Delight." The repetition, though, reminds us of a common context--of Dido in her hunting garb, Camilla in her battle gear, and Pallas in his funeral pomp, similarly arrayed in all their glory. More than a mere ornament, this "Golden Caul" is a token of momentary triumph and exaltation.

ii

The exploits of Camilla in Book Eleven are foreshadowed, even overshadowed, by the story of her youth. We learn about this initiation period from Diana, the goddess to whom

Metabus (driven from his kingdom "for Tyrannick sway")

dedicated his infant daughter:

non illum tectis ullae, non moenibus urbes  
accepere, neque ipse manus feritate dedisset:  
pastorum et solis exegit montibus aevum.  
hic natam in dumis interque horrentia lustra (570)  
armentalis equae mammis et lacte ferino  
nutribat, teneris immulgens ubera labris.  
utque pedum primis infans vestigia plantis  
institerat, iaculo palmas armavit acuto,  
spiculaque ex umero parvae suspendit et arcum. (575)  
pro crinali auro, pro longae tegmine pallae,  
tigridis exuviae per dorsum a vertice pendent.  
tela manu iam tum tenera puerilia torsit,  
et fundam tereti circum caput egit habena,  
Strymoniamque gruem aut album deiecit olorem. (580)

Him no cities received to their homes or walls,  
nor in his wild mood would he himself have yielded  
himself thereto: amid shepherds and on the lone  
mountains he passed his days. Here amid brakes  
and beasts' rugged lairs he nursed his child on  
milk at the breast of a wild mare from the herd,  
squeezing the teats into her tender lips. And as  
soon as her baby feet had planted her earliest  
steps, he armed her hands with a pointed lance,  
and hung quiver and bow from her little shoulder.  
In place of gold to clasp her hair, in place of  
long trailing robe, there hang from her head adown  
the back a tiger's spoils. Even then with her  
tender hand she hurled her childish darts, swung  
round her head the smooth-thronged sling, and  
struck down Strymonian crane or snowy swan.  
(Fairclough)

Carefully constructed, this passage falls into five sections of roughly equal length, an end-stop marking each stage of the process. The first section (567-69) treats the exile of Metabus; the second (570-72) the nursing of Camilla; the third (573-75) her training in arms; the fourth (576-77) her hunting outfit; and the fifth (578-80) her first feats of strength and skill. By the time we reach the final section, Metabus has all but disappeared from the scene and Camilla is performing on her own. "How far," asks Gordon Williams,

"is the conduct of the daughter to be explained by the nature of the father?"<sup>11</sup> Every reader must surmise for himself an answer to this question. Dryden's response is unmistakably clear--he sees Camilla as the extraordinary product of an extraordinary upbringing:

Nor after that, in Towns which Walls inclose,  
Wou'd trust his hunted Life amidst his Foes.  
But rough, in open Air he chose to lye: (850)  
Earth was his Couch, his Cov'ring was the Sky.  
On Hills unshorn, or in a desart Den,  
He shunn'd the dire Society of Men.  
A Shepherd's solitary Life he led:  
His Daughter with the Milk of Mares he fed; (855)  
The Dugs of Bears, and ev'ry Salvage Beast,  
He drew, and thro' her Lips the Liquor press'd.  
The little Amazon cou'd scarcely go,  
He loads her with a Quiver and a Bow:  
And, that she might her stagg'ring Steps command, (860)  
He with a slender Jav'lin fills her Hand:  
Her flowing Hair no golden Fillet bound;  
Nor swept her trayling Robe the dusty Ground.  
Instead of these, a Tyger's Hide o'respread  
Her Back and Shoulders, fasten'd to her Head. (865)  
The flying Dart she first attempts to fling;  
And round her tender Temples toss'd the Sling:  
Then, as her Strength with Years increas'd, began  
To pierce aloft in Air the soaring Swan:  
And from the Clouds to fetch the Heron and the Crane.  
(848-870)

There is a great deal of empathy in Dryden's portrait of this bitterly defiant exile, who "shunn'd the dire Society of Men." Dryden, of course, had every reason to be sensitive to the theme of banishment, especially "after the Revolution of 1688, a catastrophic event," according to Thomas H. Fujimira, "that deprived him of his king, his laureateship, his public, and his role as a poet."<sup>12</sup> I would not want to view Metabus the way, for instance, one might view other displaced persons in Dryden's later work (Umbricius in The Third Satyr of Juvenal, or Meliboeus in



the First Pastoral), as a surrogate spokesman for the author himself. Nevertheless, Dryden seems to have charged his sympathetic rendering with some of his own profound disaffection.

Whereas Virgil simply says that no city could offer sanctuary or receive Metabus within their homes and walls (non moenibus urbes / acceperere), Dryden presents an outlaw, a man who will not "trust his hunted Life" in "Towns which Walls inclose." This fear of enclosure and entrapment, a strikingly new emphasis on Dryden's part, is heightened by various phonic echoes (the consonance of "trust" and "amidst," the assonance of "rough" and "hunted," the internal rhyme of "chose" and "Foes"), all of which strengthen the contrast between Metabus, the outsider, and his foes, the insiders: "But rough, in open Air he chose to lye." I italicize the word "chose" because Dryden seems to stress the same point in regard to Metabus as he does in regard to Camilla (who "chose the nobler Pallas of the Field"), namely, that character determines the destiny of these strong-willed individuals. The epithet "rough," which Dryden transfers from Virgil's landscape (horrentia lustra) to the person who inhabits it, suggests, moreover, that Metabus has become as wild and rugged as his primitive surroundings. It is appropriate that Dryden may have modeled this lyrical, but totally unlicensed, couplet (850-51) on a passage of Spenser where Arthur comes to rest, worn out from his pursuit of Florimell:

Down himself he layd  
Upon the grassie ground, to sleep a throw;  
The cold earth was his couch, the hard steel his pillow.  
(FQ III iv 53)

So, too, Metabus makes his bed (851): "Earth was his Couch, his Cov'ring was the Sky." Wanderers and adventurers, out on their own, away from civilization, and exposed to the elements, Arthur and Metabus have certain things in common. Though their characters are very different, their situations are similar, and Dryden acknowledges the similarity as well as the contrast in reshaping Spenser's alexandrine to produce a new rhetorical scheme (chiasmus). The substitution itself ("his Cov'ring was the Sky") has some significance: it is a wilderness of "open Air" and "unshorn Hills," at best a "desart Den," which offers the only shelter for Camilla and her father.

The missing figure in this story, a person only mentioned once by name, is Camilla's mother.<sup>13</sup> According to Virgil, Metabus nursed his daughter at the breast of a wild mare (armentalis equae mammis). It is from Lauderdale who wrote,

With Milk of Mares, and other Beasts, he fed  
Her tender Lips,  
(XI 642-43)

that Dryden got the idea for the following verse:

His Daughter with the Milk of Mares he fed.  
(855)

Nothing, however, in the text of Virgil warrants Lauderdale's addition of "other Beasts," let alone Dryden's addition to the beasts of Lauderdale:

The Dugs of Bears, and ev'ry Salvage Beast,  
He drew, and thro' her Lips the Liqueur press'd.  
(856-57)

Lauderdale may be more literal than Dryden, but Dryden remains in some respects closer to Virgil. By placing, for example, the subject-verb ("He drew") at the beginning of the second line, he draws out the sense from one verse to the next, pushing it through the inverted syntax of the following clause (compare Virgil's placement of nutribat at the beginning of line 572). This "suckling" receives acoustical reinforcement from two sets of echoing vowels ("drew"/"thro" and "Lips"/"Liquour"), an effect that corresponds to Virgil's repetition of the same vowel sound [u] in nutribat, immulgens, and ubera. Dryden is well aware that Metabus does display maternal tenderness; at the same time, however, he wants to make it clear that this is nonetheless a brutal and unnatural nurturing. The "Milk of Mares" is one thing; the "Dugs of Bears" is quite another; and the inclusion of "ev'ry Salvage Beast" is sufficiently shocking to make the reader stop and think, or "disinvolve himself" as R.D. Williams puts it.<sup>14</sup> The sudden change in tone, the deliberate dissonance (cf. the melodic diction of "A Shepherd's solitary Life he led"), emphasizes an important point: that the lacte ferino which nourishes Camilla is filled with feritas, the fierceness of her father and of wild beasts.

There is irony as well as pathos in Virgil's portrait of this arms-bearing, weapon-wielding child; there also

comes across, in Dryden's version, a certain comic incongruity:

The little Amazon cou'd scarcely go,  
He loads her with a Quiver and a Bow:  
And, that he might her stagg'ring Steps command,  
He with a slender Jav'lin fills her Hand.  
(858-861)

Though other translators may keep "a good deal closer to what Virgil actually wrote,"<sup>15</sup>

When the small child took her first steps, he armed  
Her hands with a sharp javelin, and hung  
A bow and quiver from her infant shoulder;  
(Fitzgerald)

As she took her first steps, he placed a pointed  
lance within her hand, and from that little  
girl's shoulder he made a bow and quiver hand,  
(Mandelbaum)

they shy away from Virgil's genius for "adapting sounds to the things they signifie" (IV, 2053). Anyone who tries to construe the halting syntax of utque pedum primis infans vestigia plantis / nutribat (573-74) will find that learning how to walk is no easy thing, even for a youngster like Camilla. "Scarcely" and "stagg'ring" affirm and reaffirm this subjective impression. To signify the way in which quiver and bow hang heavily from Camilla's shoulder, Virgil slings spicula and arcum across each end of the line (575); seeking a similar effect, Dryden makes a semantic and phonetic link between the emphatic verb "loads" (which assonates with "go" and "Bow") and the mock-heroic epithet "little Amazon." The hint for the verb "loads" came from Ruaeus, whose text reads oneravit instead of armavit.<sup>16</sup> In the second couplet (860-61), Dryden wants to juxtapose

balance and imbalance, so he steadies the onomatopoeic phrase "stagg'ring Steps" with the parallel phrase "slender Jav'lin"--"slender," in this context, being a more appropriate adjective than either "pointed" or "sharp."<sup>17</sup>

"The desire for a feeling of motion," says F.O. Matthiessen of John Florio, "is the force underlying nearly all his additions. He wants always to increase the emphasis, to heighten and magnify. Such striving for action reveals itself time and again in the use of a strong verb."<sup>18</sup> What Matthiessen says of Florio, the Elizabethan translator of Montaigne, is also true of Dryden, whose "love of fullness and elaboration"<sup>19</sup> equals that of any writer (Hoby, North, or Holland) Matthiessen discusses. Yet even at his most expansive, as, for instance, in the following couplet (862-63),

Her flowing Hair no golden Fillet bound;  
Nor swept her trayling Robe the dusty Ground,

Dryden still retains some stylistic affinity with the original (pro crinali auro, pro longae tegmine pallae). The negative assertions ("no . . . Nor") prepare us for the pivotal phrase that follows ("Instead of these"), and that is why they generate the impact of a simple but forceful repetition (pro . . . pro). In line 864, Dryden uses enjambment to good effect so that the verb "o'respread" spreads over the "Back and Shoulders" of Camilla; here, too, there is a close affinity with Virgil, who places the verb pendent in an expressive spot, hanging, as it were, at

the end of the line (tigridis exuviae per dorsum a vertice pendent).

Nowhere, however, does Dryden exhibit a stronger "desire for a feeling of motion" than in the magnificent triplet which concludes this passage:

Then, as her Years with Strength increas'd, began  
To pierce aloft in Air the soaring Swan;  
And from the Clouds to fetch the Heron and the Crane.

Bursting from the confines of a temporal clause and an all but terminal caesura, the poetic line increases in strength, starting with "began," till it reaches its full extent in the final alexandrine. Most of this material is, of course, Dryden's own: the projected "Years," the spatial imagery ("aloft in Air" and "from the Clouds"), even that extra bird "the Heron." Yet all this verbal exuberance is carefully controlled, the purpose of the dart being "to pierce" and that of the sling being "to fetch."

More than anything else, Dryden wants to convey the sense of a prodigious and precocious feat, and he seems to have felt that a reference to the river Strymon in Thrace would have meant little or nothing to his fellow readers, whatever mythic resonance it may have had for Virgil's contemporaries. Strymoniam, says R.D. Williams, is "an ornate epithet, referring to the famous cranes" of that river,<sup>20</sup> and this ornate epithet is one of many "Circumstances" which Dryden, unlike say Fitzgerald, felt free to omit:

as a child  
She flung play darts with her soft hand and whirled  
A sling stone on a strap around her head  
To fell a crane of Strymon or a swan.

Accurate, elegant, idiomatic, Fitzgerald provides better close equivalents for tela puerilia and fundam ("play darts" and a "sling stone") than anyone else. There are other ways, however, of getting close to Virgil, and no one, I think, comes closer than Dryden to reproducing the expansive sweep of the Latin hexameter: Strymoniamque gruem aut album deiecit olorem (580). As Virgil spans his crane across two dactyls, so Dryden achieves a similar extension with his hypermetric line, "And from the Clouds to fetch the Heron and the Crane."

Proudfoot finds it "a pity that this strange and delightful passage should . . . end with so much false rhyming and the undue addition of the triplet line."<sup>21</sup> It seems to me that Proudfoot misses the point not only of the "triplet line" (which, as we have seen, is hardly an "undue addition"), but also of the "false rhyming." The jarring dissonance of the slant rhymes ("began," "Swan," "Crane") calls attention to itself, and becomes of a figurative piece with the strange and incongruous character of Camilla (the "little Amazon") herself.

iii

In the Third Book of the Faerie Queene, Spenser laments:  
Where is the Antique Glory now become  
That whilom wont in women to appeare?

He burns "with envy sore"

To hear the warlike feats, which Homere spake  
Of bold Penthelisee, which made a lake  
Of Greekish blood so oft in Trojan plain;  
But when I read how stout Debora strake  
Proud Sisera, and how Camill' hath slaine  
The huge Orsilochus, I swell with great disdain.  
(Canto IV, Stanzas i-ii)

Though none of these women can compare, in virtue or in  
valor, with "noble Britomart," it is easy to see why Spenser  
chose this particular exploit of Camilla, the slaying of  
Orsilochus, to conclude his catalogue of "warlike feats":

Orsilochum, fugiens magnumque agitata per orbem,  
eludit gyro interior sequiturque sequentem;  
tum validam perque arma viro perque ossa securim,  
altior exurgens, oranti et multa precanti  
congeminat; volnus calido rigat ora cerebro.  
(694-598)

Orsilochus she flees, and, chased in a wide  
circle, foils him, wheels in an inner ring and  
pursues the pursuer; then rising higher, she  
drives her strong axe again and again through  
armour and through bone, albeit he implores and  
prays oft for mercy; the wound spatters the face  
with warm brain.

(Fairclough)

A superior athlete who uses her wits to outsmart and  
outmaneuver her opponent, Camilla is every bit as brutal as  
"stout Debora." Such raw physical courage, a quality  
Spenser calls "puissance," elicits the enthusiastic response  
of Dryden, too:

Orsilochus and she, their Coursers ply;  
He seems to follow, and she seems to fly.  
But in a narrower Ring she makes the Race;  
And then he flies, and she pursues the Chase.  
Gath'ring at length on her deluded Foe,  
She swings her Axe, and rises to the Blow:  
Full on the Helm behind, with such a sway  
The Weapon falls, the riven Steel gives way:  
He groans, he roars, he sues in vain for Grace;  
Brains, mingled with his Blood, besmear his Face.  
(1024-1033)



Most critics would agree with Reuben Brower that Dryden's "rhetorical tone, which has a counterpart in Virgil, is louder and more insistent throughout."<sup>22</sup> Even so, a translator like Fitzgerald, whose tone is quiet and uninsistent, will sometimes take from Dryden a felicitous phrase or two:

Then running as Orsilochus gave chase  
In a wide circuit, tricking him, she closed  
A narrowing ring till she became pursuer.

The contrast is instructive. Omitting any mention of a "wide circuit," Dryden prefers to make his point through an implied comparison ("But in a narrower Ring she makes the Race"). Nor does he provide a lexical equivalent for eludit, saying instead: "He seems to follow, and she seems to fly." The repetition of "seems" conveys this deception more effectively than any dictionary definition. As Camilla doubles back on her pursuer (sequiturque sequentem), Dryden executes a comparable turn ("And then he flies, and she pursues the Chase"), which improves upon his earlier effort in The Indian Emperor to imitate Virgil's word play. Compare the final line of this stanza from Act IV, Scene iii:

As if the Cares of Humane Life were few  
We seek out new:  
And follow fate which would too fast pursue.<sup>23</sup>

Percy Adams has demonstrated the variety of purposes that may be served by such phonic echoes as consonance, assonance, and alliteration: "To provide more ornament, more pleasurable sounds"; to fit "sound to sense, for

representative meter"; and finally, "to aid the structure, the rhetoric, the idea."<sup>24</sup> Dryden's passage, like so many others in his Aeneid, is rich in recurrent patterns of sound, some rather obvious and some quite subtle. In the opening lines, alliteration emphasizes the parallel structure of the infinitive phrases "to follow" and "to fly," and ties together the related nouns "Ring" and "Race." Consonance, moreover, can cooperate with alliteration to underscore the idea that Camilla, for instance, is fast closing in on her enemy: "Gath'ring at length on her deluded Foe" (where "Gath'ring" consonates with "length," which in turn alliterates with "deluded"). We know for a fact that Dryden was acutely conscious of such acoustical effects: "either my Ear deceives me," he says of one of his own couplets, "or they express the thing which I intended in their Sound" (IV, 2053). What Dryden wants to express in the following verses, I think, is the descending motion of Camilla's axe:

Full on the Helm behind, with such a sway  
The Weapon falls, the riven Steel gives way.  
(1030-31)

Several factors, including the phonic echoes, help produce this effect. There is, first of all, the inverted syntax, thanks to which the completion of the action coincides with the completion of the sentence. The meter, too, is representative. At the peak of the movement comes an initial trochee ("Full on the Helm"),<sup>25</sup> then a slight pause after "behind," the impetus going forward through "sway" to

"falls," where a strong caesura (caedere means to cut) literally divides the line. When, in the final hemistich, "the riven Steel gives way," the very action is bodied forth by a collocation of like sounds ("iv"), and a dislocation of meter (witness the terminal spondee).

In a note to line 697 (oranti et multa precanti), T.E. Page remarks that "the assonance imitates the continual iteration of his [Orsilochus'] prayer."<sup>26</sup> The rhetorical devices that Dryden employs to imitate this iteration are asyndeton and anaphora, the omission of conjunctions in three successive clauses ("He groans, he roars, he sues in vain for Grace"). Louder and more insistent than Virgil, Dryden piles one acoustical echo upon the other--the key word "groans" assonates with "roars," alliterates with "Grace," and consonates, in the ensuing line, with "Brains" (which in turn assonates with "vain"). This dissonant bellowing may be justified by the Latin multa, a substantive having the adverbial force of "greatly" or "exceedingly." To suggest the impact of the blow and its immediate consequence, Virgil juxtaposes two emphatic words (congeminat; vulnus); thanks in part to an initial, broken spondee ("Brains, mingled with his Blood, besmear his Face"), Dryden achieves the same sort of verbal violence. There is also something "connatural to the subject" in the very sound of these words, in that double alliteration of the bilabials [b] and [m], whereby Dryden can imprint, not unlike his master Virgil, an indelible image of slaughter.

In this line (1033) and elsewhere in Book Eleven, Dryden shows the influence of a "Mr." Stafford, whose "Episode of the Death of Camilla" appeared in Sylvae: Or, the Second Part of Poetical Miscellanies (1685). Compare Stafford's depiction of Orsiloehus: "His reeking face bespatter'd with his brains."<sup>27</sup>

iv

At the height of her glory, Virgil makes ready for the downfall of Camilla, who comes to grief in the end because of one outstanding flaw, the same trait that causes the demise of Nisus and Euryalus, namely, the desire for spoils. "Afire with an all too feminine love of plunder," says W.S. Anderson, "she forgets the battle and presents an all too easy target to the archer Arruns."<sup>28</sup> To prepare for this event, Virgil interposes the point of view of three misogynistic men: Aunus, Tarchon, and the slayer of Camilla, Aruns. I shall not quote their speeches in full, only the lines that voice their hatred of womankind in general and Camilla in particular:

It shall be seen, weak Woman, what you can,  
When Foot to Foot, you combat with a Man.  
(1044-45)

Cowards incurable, a Woman's Hand  
Drives, breaks, and scatters your ignoble Band!  
(1079-80)

Let me, by stealth, this Female Plague o'recome;  
And from the Field, return inglorious Home.  
(1163-64)

The dramatic context varies from speaker to speaker (Aunus insulting Camilla to her face, Tarchon trying to rouse his troops, Aruns praying to Apollo), and in every instance Dryden supplies a phrase ("weak Woman," "a Woman's Hand," "this Female Plague") which sharpens the satiric thrust of the Latin. Aunus and Tarchon address her as femina:

quid tam egregium, si femina forti  
fidis equo?  
(705-06)

femina palantis agit atque haec agmina vertit?  
(734)

Aruns, much more strongly, as haec dira pestis:

haec cira meo dum vulnere pestis  
pulsa cedat, patris remeabo inglorius urbes.  
(792-93)

Femina is a loaded word, as Dryden was well aware:

"varium & mutabile semper femina," he tells us in his Dedication, "is the sharpest Satire in the fewest words that was ever made on Womankind" (III, 1029). By blackening the character of her foes, the poet puts Camilla in a sympathetic light.

It is an indication, I think, of Virgil's own ambivalent (and deeply divided) attitude toward Camilla that he allows but a portion of Aruns' prayer to find favor with Apollo:

Audiit et voti Phoebus succedere partem  
mentem dedit, partem volucris dispersit in auras.  
(794-95)

As Dryden puts it:

Apollo heard, and granting half his Pray'r,  
Shuffled in Winds the rest, and toss'd in empty Air.  
(1165-66)

Aruns gets his wish--that he should slay Camilla--but he does not get his other wish: that he should live to see his native country. This richly deserved irony, it may be remembered, is put to mock-heroic use in The Rape of the Lock when, drawing on Dryden's own words in the Aeneid, Pope allows the Baron only "half his Pray'r":

The Pow'rs gave Ear, and granted half his Pray'r,  
The rest, the Winds dispers'd in empty Air.  
(II 45-46)<sup>29</sup>

Aruns has no way of knowing the outcome of his prayer, and he seizes the present moment to spring his ambush:

ergo ubi missa manu sonitum dedit hasta per auras,  
convertere animos acris oculosque tulere  
cuncti ad reginam Volsci. nihil ipsa nec aurae  
nec sonitus memor aut venientis ab aethere teli.  
(799-802)

Therefore, when the spear, sped from his hand,  
whizzed through the air, all the Volscians turned  
their eager eyes and minds upon the queen. She  
herself, neither of air, nor of sound, nor of  
weapon coming from the sky recked aught.  
(Fairclough)

Dryden's version introduces a balanced perspective so that all parties (not merely the Volscians) are witness to the grim spectacle:

Now, when the Jav'lin whizzed along the Skies,  
Both Armies on Camilla turn'd their Eyes,  
Directed by the Sound: Of either Host,  
Th' unhappy Virgin, tho' concern'd the most,  
Was only deaf; so greedy was she bent  
On Golden Spoils, and on her Prey intent.  
(1169-75)

The division of "Both Armies" (concti Volsci) into "either Host" brings Camilla into the foreground and sets her apart in lonely isolation; thus the irony of being "only deaf," a powerful compression of one and a half lines of Latin verse

(801-02), seems all the more poignant (the epithet "unhappy" carried in Dryden's day the sense of "unfortunate" or "unlucky" rather than "sad" or "wretched"). To remind us why Camilla remains oblivious, when everyone else is keenly aware (animos acris) of her impending danger, Dryden recapitulates the events leading up to this. The "Golden Spoils" (a literal translation of captivo auro, line 779) are the gorgeous trappings of Chloereus, the Trojan priest of Apollo whom Camilla had been stalking earlier, and hence her "Prey." A masterful summary in and of themselves, these added lines (1174-75) recall another tragic context, that of Euryalus in Book Nine:

Yet fond of gaudy Spoils the Boy wou'd stay  
To make the rich Caparison his prey,  
Which on the steed of conquer'd Rhamnes lay.  
(484-86)

One of many tributes which Pope paid to Dryden was the memento mori in his imitation of Horace:

Inexorable Death shall level all,  
And Trees, and Stones, and Farms, and Farmer fall.  
(Epistle II ii 262-63)

Compare the dying speech of Dryden's Camilla:

Acca, 'tis past! He swims before my sight,  
Inexorable Death; and claims his right.  
(1197-98)

What Camilla says to her companion Acca has a direct and obvious bearing on Pope's admonition to his noble friend Bathurst: it extends death's dominion to other worlds, from the remote past of Virgil to the recent age of Dryden. There is also something subtly subversive about Pope's reminiscence. In restoring the words of Dryden, Pope

asserts his right to a literary inheritance, which counters the claim of death and undermines its authority as the ultimate leveler. Both authors have their own way of presenting and interpreting what Horace and Virgil actually wrote. Here is what Camilla actually says:

"hactenus, Acca soror, potui; nunc volnus acerbum  
conficit et tenebras nigrescunt omnia circum."  
(823-24)

"Thus far, sister Acca, has my strength availed;  
now the bitter wound o'erpowers me, and all around  
grows dim and dark."

(Fairclough)

We can admire with R.D. Williams the words of Virgil ("impressive in their simplicity")<sup>30</sup> and appreciate, at the same time, the image of death which Dryden presents ("He swims before my sight"), an image reminiscent of a similar personification from Dryden's greatest play, All for Love:

My sight grows dim, and every object dances  
And swims before me in the maze of death.  
(III 470-71)

The speaker here is Cleopatra, and the fainting fit she suffers (after her interview with Octavia) foreshadows her death at the end of the play. Oddly enough, Cleopatra's words ("my sight grows dim") are closer to the Latin original (tenebras nigrescunt omnia circum) than its adaptation twenty years later.

One does not echo what does not continue to ring in the mind. It is likely, especially when one considers the extent to which Pope echoes Dryden, that contemporary readers would have responded warmly to the last words of Camilla--words which echo clearly and tellingly the tragic



accents of Cleopatra. "These lines," according to Proudfoot, "are neutral, reasonably faithful to the original, not strikingly felicitous, but not bad."<sup>31</sup> Whatever degree of felicity one may care to assign them, it is only in isolation from their cultural matrix that the lines in question (like so many others) can be considered "neutral."

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup>R.D. Williams, II, 226.

<sup>2</sup>Literary Language and Its Public in Late Latin Antiquity, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 183.

<sup>3</sup>Auerbach, p. 185.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. XI 433: agmen agens equitem et florentis aere catervas.

<sup>6</sup>"Coarsening the Tone" is one of Proudfoot's topics, pp. 208-219; this misguided and misleading attitude derives from Mark Van Doren: "Yet in the main the texture of his verse is coarse; Dryden has made no advance in subtlety of speech; he is only applying standard formulas and achieving standard results" (John Dryden: A Study of His Poetry, p. 130).

<sup>7</sup>The Random House Dictionary of the English Language (1968); the OED defines "virago" as a "female warrior."

<sup>8</sup>See The Altar and the City: A Reading of Virgil's Aeneid (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1974), p. 134.

<sup>9</sup>Page, II, 201-02.

<sup>10</sup>For a good discussion of the ambivalent tone of these last few lines, see DiCesare, pp. 134-35.

<sup>11</sup>See Technique and Ideas in the Aeneid (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1983), p. 19.

<sup>12</sup>"'Autobiography' in Dryden's Later Work," Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660-1700, VIII (1984), 17.

<sup>13</sup>See lines 542-43: matrisque vocavit / nomine Casmillae, mutata parte, Camillam.

<sup>14</sup>"The twentieth-century critic," says R.D. Williams, "may well look longingly for a dose of the hard and robust Dryden, asking to be allowed to disinvolve himself, to be permitted a little distance." This statement appears as an epigraph in W.R. Johnson's book, Darkness Visible, p. 49.

<sup>15</sup>See Jasper Griffin's review of Fitzgerald's Aeneid, "Stateliest Version," TLS (February 24, 1984), p. 196.

<sup>16</sup>Ruaeus, p. 526.

<sup>17</sup>On the "latent imagery" of this "charming three-line vignette," see Kenneth Quinn, Virgil's Aeneid, p. 427.

<sup>18</sup>Translation: An Elizabethan Art, p. 135.

<sup>19</sup>Matthiessen, p. 188.

<sup>20</sup>Williams, II, 418.

<sup>21</sup>Proudfoot, p. 191.

<sup>22</sup>Mirror on Mirror (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1974), p. 141.

<sup>23</sup>The Works of John Dryden, ed. John Loftis, Vol. IX (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1966), p. 83.

<sup>24</sup>Graces of Harmony, pp. 184-86.

<sup>25</sup>Dryden employed a similar metrical emphasis in Mac Flecknoe: "And from his brows damps of oblivion shed / Full on the filial dullness: (135-36).

<sup>26</sup>Page, II, 401.

<sup>27</sup>Sylvae, p. 485.

<sup>28</sup>The Art of the Aeneid (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1969), p. 91.

<sup>29</sup>Although Pope is echoing Dryden almost word for word, he uses the verb "dispers'd" (instead of, say, "shuffled" or "toss'd") in order to retain some flavor of the Latin original (dispersit).

<sup>30</sup>Williams, II 432.

<sup>31</sup>Proudfoot, p. 214.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

"This result of Dryden's enterprise," Jackson Knight declared of Dryden's Aeneid some forty years ago, "is a poem of Dryden's age, which is not to us very Virgilian."<sup>1</sup> It is only recently that critics like Robert H. Bell have begun to challenge this view:

Dryden may not have delivered the best of all possible Virgils, since his translation is certainly in and of his own time; yet Dryden's Aeneid is richly complex, and in significant ways closer to Virgil's epic vision than our twentieth-century perspective.<sup>2</sup>

Like Bell, I have tried to suggest something of the rich complexity of Dryden's Aeneid and something of its essential affinity with Virgil. My own study, I am well aware, is but a "partial attack on an unwieldy topic."<sup>3</sup> What makes the topic so unwieldy (sheer magnitude aside) is that we simply do not have a comprehensive edition of Dryden's Virgil-- nothing which approaches the Twickenham Edition of Pope's Homer.<sup>4</sup> Until the California Press provides such an edition, the verdict of Earl Miner will still stand:

The definitive study of Dryden's Virgil remains to be written, but it seems beyond question that it is the most important translation in the language, considering both subject and rendering.<sup>5</sup>

I have tried to look as closely as possible at Dryden's rendering: at what he does to Virgil, how he does it, and

why. In each chapter, I have had to focus on a few selected passages. Although I make an effort in each case to justify my selection, the passages themselves are their own best justification. As Dryden said of Chaucer, "here is God's Plenty" (IV, 1455).

Despite the excellent spadework of such scholars as Bottkol, Frost, Hooker, and Proudfoot, the literary background of Dryden's Virgil remains remote and sketchy. From Proudfoot's account of his own enterprise, one can understand why:

Originally I collated Dryden's Aeneid with the whole twelve books of Ogilby, transcribing all the passages in which the resemblances seemed significant, and then did the same for eight books of Lauderdale. This proved too massive an undertaking altogether. . . . I decided accordingly to concentrate upon one book of the Aeneid.<sup>6</sup>

Two years before Proudfoot published his findings, James Kinsley could say of Dryden that "his commonest borrowings are rhyme-words, and occasional words and phrases; adaptations of complete lines and couplets are few" (IV, 2031). We now know, thanks to Proudfoot, that "Dryden's borrowings were much larger, more frequent, more organic, and more complex than students of the past had assumed."<sup>7</sup> My own hunch is that Dryden's borrowings are not confined to the couplet tradition of Virgilian translation; like his "nimble Spaniel," they range over the entire field of English poetry. In many ways, Dryden's allusive practice is similar to Pope's. Some of the reminiscences "are probably no more than quasi-conscious, fortuitous echoes of a general

heroic vocabulary, but others recall with sharper particularity the action or atmosphere of recent English epics" (TE VII, cxxix). Spencer and Milton provided Dryden with numerous verbal parallels of this sort; and I have no doubt that other verse translators (Sandys, Fairfax, Harrington, and Fanshawe) of other epic poets (Ovid, Tasso, Ariosto, and Camoens) provided him with many more.

Foreign as well as native sources must be reckoned with. Proudfoot has pointed out that Dryden "occasionally versified a gloss from the French of Segrais" (whose translation of Virgil first appeared in 1668).<sup>8</sup> An even earlier translation (1581) which Dryden seems to have known and studied is that of "Hannibal Caro's in the Italian"; Dryden called it, in 1685, "the nearest, the most Poetical, and the most Sonorous of any Translation of the Aeneids" (Preface to Sylvae, I, 393). Twelve years later, his opinion changes: "Hannibal Caro is a great Name amongst the Italians, yet his Translation is most scandalously mean" (Dedication of the Aeneis, III, 1049). "There is clear evidence," according to William Frost, "that Dryden knew and consulted his version."<sup>9</sup> No one as yet, however, has fully considered the extent to which Dryden was influenced by Caro. Such a study would throw some needed light on Dryden's Virgil; it might also tell us something new about his development as a poet and critic.

I mention these matters, not because they bear upon my dissertation per se, but because they indicate the contours of the more extensive study I hope to undertake.

Notes

<sup>1</sup>Roman Vergil (London: Faber and Faber, 1944), p. 314.

<sup>2</sup>"Dryden's Aeneid as English Augustan Epic," Criticism, XIX (1977), 34.

<sup>3</sup>That is how William Frost characterizes some other translation studies. See "Dryden and the Classics: With a look at His 'Aeneis,'" Writers and Their Background, ed. Earl Miner (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1972), p. 278.

<sup>4</sup>James Kinsley (Oxford Univ. Press, 1958) provides a definitive text, but it is very lightly annotated.

<sup>5</sup>"Dryden's Admired Acquaintance, Mr. Milton," Milton Studies, XI, 20.

<sup>6</sup>Dryden's Aeneid, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup>William Frost's review of Proudfoot, Classical Philology, LVII (1962), 119.

<sup>8</sup>Proudfoot, p. 266.

<sup>9</sup>See "On Editing Dryden's Virgil," Editing Poetry from Spenser to Dryden, ed. A.H. De Quehen (New York: Garland Publishing), p. 119.

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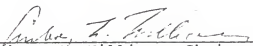
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I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

  
Aubrey L. Williams, Chairman  
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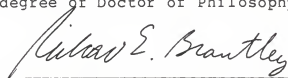
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August 1985

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